

Issue 38

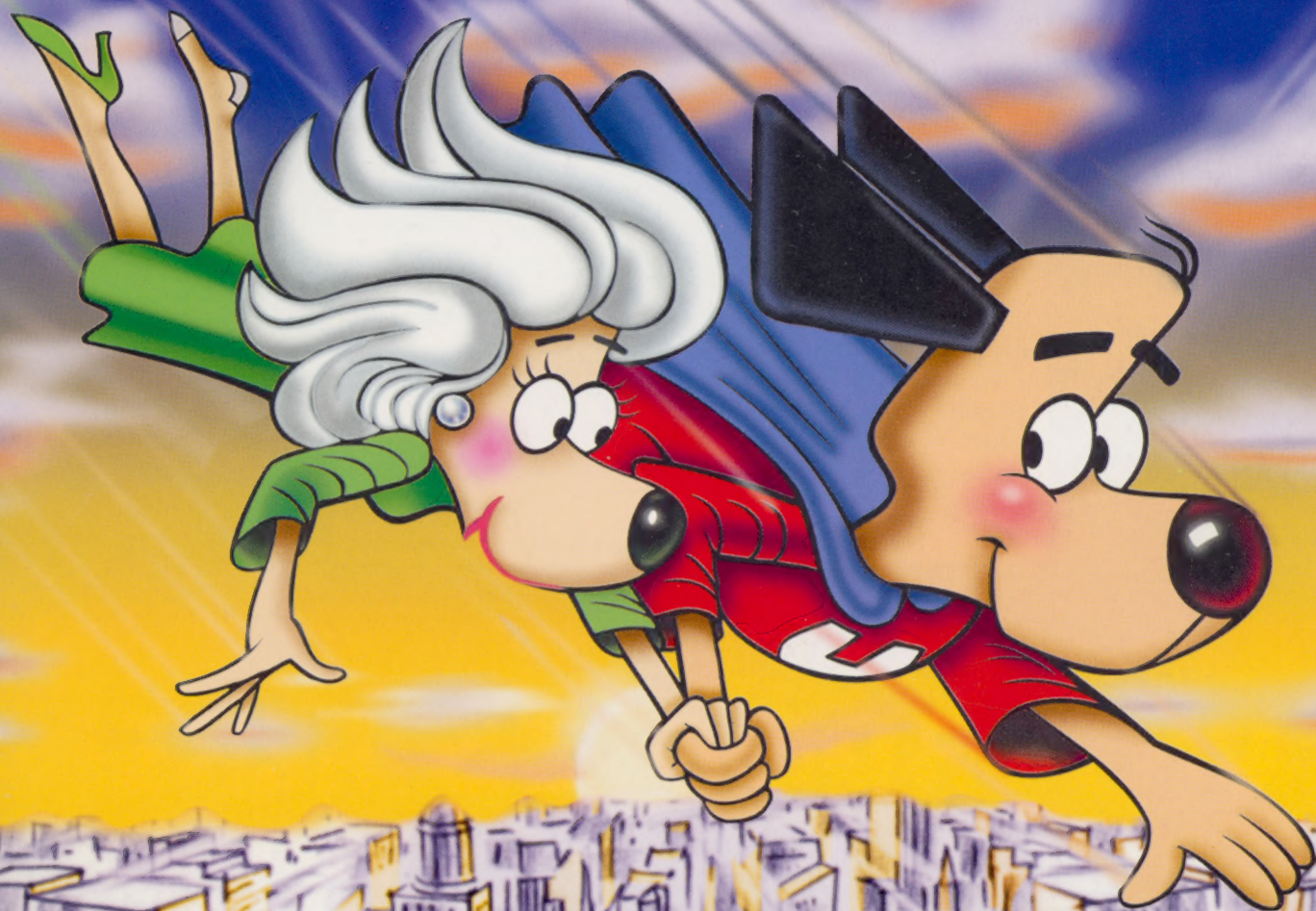
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ANIMATO!

The Animation Fan's Magazine

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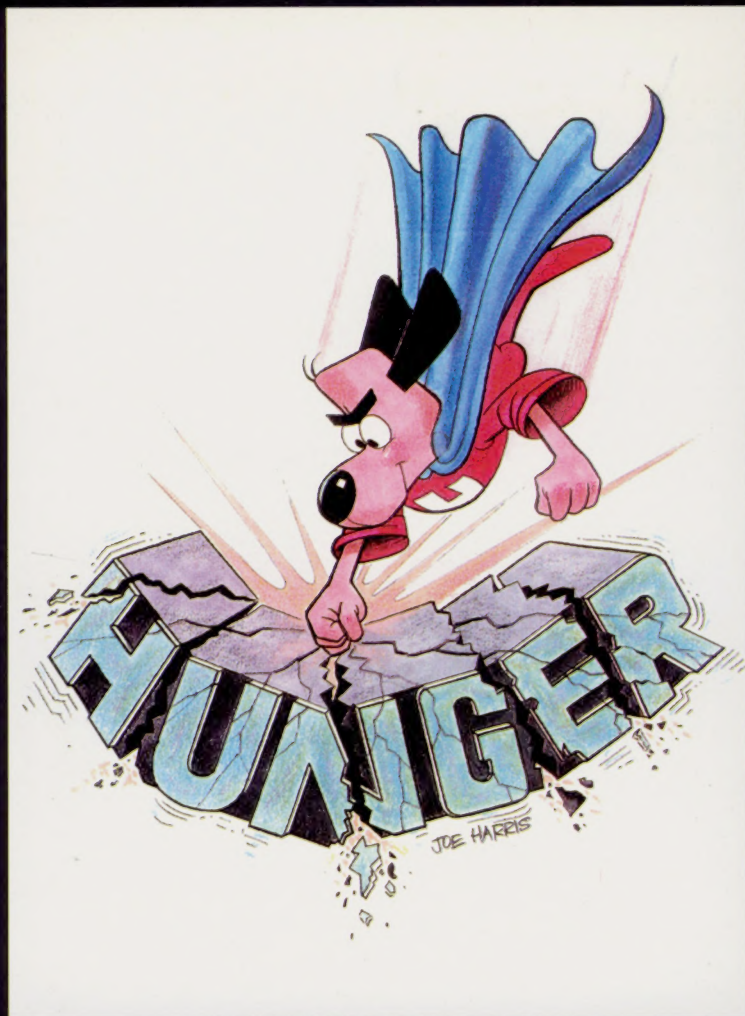


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ANIMATO!

The Animation Fan's Magazine

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About the Cover...

Joe Harris, the creator of Underdog, sent us an original piece of artwork rendered in charcoal and ink.

Ray Dorow II of IllustRAYtor did his usual excellent job of preparing and coloring the cover on his Macintosh. The color palette turned out to be a cut above spectacular!

PUBLISHER TORIAL



Images! Images! Images!

How powerful is an image? Depends on where you live. Drawing a religious leader on the back of a pig in the Middle East will incite riots and land you in the pokey. In America, a bishop riding a pig would be considered filler story. *Witty World* magazine has routinely published reports of cartoonists around the world being imprisoned, tortured, and even put to death for the "crime" of creating an unflattering image in a political cartoon. Daring to portray the local despot as a crook or sexual deviant is a sure path to a painful demise.

Political cartoons were the bane of Boss Tweed because he knew illiterate voters could get the drift of Nast. If a picture is worth a thousand words, what subliminal data is processed at an amazing 24 frames-per-second?

In the U.S.A. we have unique problems that don't surface in other countries. Moving images seem to have complete and utter control of a population ruled by children. Crueller than Cruella de Vil could imagine, animal shelters have been inundated with abandoned Dalmatian pups. Thousands of so-called parents purchased Dalmatians for their whining offspring after the kiddies watched *101 Dalmatians* and begged for a pup. (Parental hint #3: Saying "No!" to a seven-year-old isn't considered child abuse in most states.) A local columnist blamed Disney for the situation, also citing *Bambi* for making America anti-hunting. How fortunate Disney didn't release *101 Pit Bulls* or *101 Wolverines*.

More chat about images. Earlier this year when we knew the *Underdog* story was shaping up to cover status, I contacted Joe Harris about doing an original cover for ANiMATO! Joe was enthusiastic about the project and jumped in with artwork, contacts and an essay. A few months later the World Hunger Year organizers picked *Underdog* as their mascot so Joe did a lithograph of *Underdog* smashing "hunger" for the charity. (See inside front cover.) About the same time, we were planning to print poster-size sheets of our cover art for Joe to sign at charity functions. When Joe was in New York discussing artwork for a group of limited edition sericels, he showed our cover proof to Heidi Leigh of Animazing Gallery. Leigh was so taken with the artwork and spectacular color, she thought the ANiMATO! cover would make a terrific sericel. And so it will be.

I've always had reservations about sericels, so the news that our magazine cover would be the initial source for a limited edition sericel left me with mixed emotions.

I've been able to appreciate certain sericels for the art, subject matter or animator involved. Especially the animators. Myron Waldman is a good example. How could anyone meet this man and not want a memento of his life?

On the other hand, the 150,000 unit "limited edition" run of *Fudge the Frog* in the San Diego Padres road uniform signed by the floor sweeper at Nebbish Studios leaves me cold. Sorry. It's not a limited edition when they're stacked a hundred deep at Wal-Mart.

After working with Joe Harris on this issue, I have become a Joe Harris fan. He's what we call a straight-shooter 'round these parts.

I expect I'll be purchasing an *Underdog* sericel. Partly because I'm an *Underdog* fan, partly because I'm a Joe Harris fan. But mostly, the sericel will be a nice memento of this issue.

CULTURAL JETLAG—JIM SIERGEY & TOM ROBERTS

A DISNEY-TARANTINO PRODUCTION

101 RESERVOIR DALMATIANS

IT'LL EAT "BABE" FOR BREAKFAST!

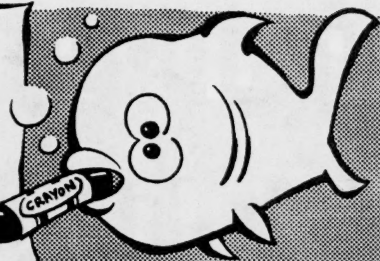
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PT PAPER TRAINING SUGGESTED ©1996 JIM SIERGEY A WAG OF RETAIL TO TOM KUILOSL

FAN MAIL FROM SOME FLOUNDER



Dear Sir:

As a fifty-something animation enthusiast and video collector, I despair at the large number of animated cartoon works which have never been released on home video and are slowly turning to celluloid dust as they sit on the shelf in some studio vault. It's nice that Disney is releasing *Fun and Fancy Free* this year but will we ever get to see *Melody Time*, *Make Mine Music* or *Victory Through Air Power*? Their music may be dated, but these 1940s productions contain some excellent animation. Furthermore, is there any way of persuading Columbia Pictures to release their *Phantasy Cartoons* of the 1940s or the 1937 classic, *The Little Match Girl*?

The major studios do not seem to comprehend two very important facts:

1. They are sitting on a gold mine of vintage animation in their libraries. If they don't want to put it out on video for mass consumption, then release it on laserdisc for serious collectors.

2. Cartoons are not just for kids. There are a large number of animation enthusiasts who would snap this stuff up the moment it was released. Please don't give us those old excuses about politically-incorrect cartoons containing "negative stereotypes;" Animation collectors are all adults and we realize that the prevailing attitudes of the past differed greatly from today's social climate.

Finally, three cheers for Jerry Beck and George Feltenstein of MGM/UA Home Video for giving us five boxed laserdisc sets of vintage Warner Brothers Cartoons, two sets of Tom and Jerry plus Tex Avery and Harmon/Ising laserdiscs. Long may they prosper!

--Michael Oldfield
Canada

Dear ANiMATO!,

Are you ever going to do a story on Daws Butler?
--Anxious Fan

Dear Anxious,

We aren't planning anything on Mr. Butler in the immediate future, but the current issue of fps magazine contains an affectionate profile of Daws Butler's career by Joe Bevilacqua.
--Patrick

Dear Sir:

The Cartoon Network should devote a late-night slot entirely to uncensored cartoons.
--K4ZK

Dear K,

I would like to see a special time slot and a "scholastic" line of video (or laser) for animation historians and fans covering all those sensitive or suppressed films. I don't believe we should deny history by censoring and suppressing.
--Patrick



Marv Newland mailed this sketch after we sent him a staff shirt for being the first to respond to our 1996 Film Poll and he also won a T-shirt in our random drawing.

Happy Birthday Chuck Jones

Birthday Wishes to Chuck Jones, the Father.
Linda Jones Clough interview by Glenn Anton

On September 21, Chuck Jones turned eighty-five years old. Much has been written about this living monument of the animation industry. But while we so often examine Chuck Jones, the animator/writer/director/producer, his birthday is a time to look at Chuck Jones, the man. As for the question of who could best recant memories of Chuck, the decision was simple. Who would know him better than his daughter, who has been with him for sixty years? And Linda Jones Clough was more than happy to reminisce about her father, although she found it difficult to talk about his fame.

"It's hard for me to comment on Chuck Jones, the celebrity," said Linda. "He's my dad, and he's a great dad. That's the most important thing to me. He's a wonderful father."

To Linda, Chuck has been that wonderful father since day one. Besides explaining how he gave her what she fondly proclaims a perfect childhood, she was quick to point out that her father wasn't always the celebrity that he is today.

"He went to work in the morning and came home at night like all other dads. The biggest difference was that he did a job that all of my friends thought was pretty superior to everyone else's dad. I thought he had the best job of any father I knew, too, until a friend of mine told me her dad owned a bakery. I thought that job was better than my father's."

"When I was a child, the cartoons were being shown on Saturday afternoon in the movie theaters. We didn't have televisions in anyone's homes until the Forties and my parents didn't get one until after I had gone to college. So I never grew up with television. I saw the characters in the



crowded theaters. I vividly remember an incident when I was seven and attending one of those Saturday afternoon matinees. I was sitting in the packed theater and there was a little boy sitting next to me. When my father's name appeared on the screen I poked the boy with my elbow, pointed to the screen, and proudly said, 'That's my daddy'. The boy looked at me with disdain and said, 'Yeah, and my father is Clark Gable'. I thought he was making fun of me, but when I look back, it didn't

occur to me that he might have been telling me the truth."

Growing up an only child, Linda was not just a fan of the characters her father worked on at the Warner Brothers Animation Studios. She considered the characters he directed to be her brothers and sisters. And like her father, she felt a kindred spirit with the rascally Daffy Duck.

"We all have been of the opinion that these characters are real and Chuck draws pictures of them. As I was growing up, they were real in my mind. I've always loved all of the characters that he created and worked on."

Linda has had the luck to work alongside her father for the last thirty-five years. She worked in various capacities for Chuck while he made his television specials, which included *The Cricket in Times Square*, *A Very Merry Cricket*, and *Yankee Doodle Cricket* for ABC-TV, *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*, *The White Seal*, *Mowgli's Brothers* for CBS-TV, and Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. She started Linda Jones Enterprises in 1977 and has been running Chuck Jones Enterprises since 1980. Until Warner Brothers' recent closing of Chuck Jones Film Productions, Linda had been acting as producer of the CJFP theatrical cartoons.

"We've been very close personally and professionally," she explained while fondly recalling working alongside her father. "He's continually commented that the reason he wanted me as his producer was because he wanted a producer he could kiss instead of curse, which had never been the case before."

"Having worked with him for so long, it's been difficult to know how to respond to him or address him during business affairs. I call him Chuck because we found out early on that it was embarrassing for both of us if, in the middle of a high level executive meeting, I call him daddy. So, because of the business aspect, I started calling him Chuck about twenty-five years ago. Our relationship hasn't been affected by our working together, and we work very naturally

(Continued on page 86)

HYBRID

take the journey to
Etherworld

the
quest
begins
here . . . AD1997



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Women in Animation

By Jessie Nagel

Welcome to my inaugural column on women in animation. This column has been launched to profile women in the industry past and present, highlight new projects produced by female animators, and discuss other topics important to women in animation. I begin with an overview of the professional organization Women In Animation, of which I am a founding member and secretary for the International Board of Directors.

Women In Animation was formed in 1994 by Rita Street, former publisher of Animation Magazine. Her goal was to create a professional organization to promote the advancement of women in any and all aspects of animation. In addition, WIA was formed to preserve and promote the art and industry of animation. What began as a group of thirty industry professionals sitting in Rita's living room has grown into an international non-profit organization, with chapters in New York and Los Angeles, budding chapters in Vancouver (Canada), Phoenix, Portland, and international membership that extends as far as Australia, the UK and Japan.

Interestingly, many WIA members are men. This is an important fact because it shows that the organization presents compelling events and supplies networking opportunities without gender bias. For while our goal is to promote women in animation — via support, education and networking — we also strive to counter prejudice with a policy of nondiscrimination. In addition, the organization has developed programs that involve and benefit men, women and children. If any of the following interest you, please call the **Women In Animation/International Hotline** at 818-759-0596.

The Youth and Education committee was formed to promote internships and mentor programs in animation studios. The committee provides information on schools, portfolios, classes and studios that have training programs. Sadly, WIA founding member and Youth and Education chairperson Phyllis Craig, passed away on May 18. Hundreds of students were counseled by Phyllis and, as a result, obtained internships and permanent positions in the industry. Phyllis was an inspiring individual who truly loved the animation community and "her kids" (as she called the young people she counseled). In honor of our friend and associate, Women In Animation has established "The Phyllis Craig Scholarship Fund" to benefit the education of any Women In Animation member that meets the guidelines of the fund. Donations can be made and additional information obtained by calling the WIA hotline.

Phyllis Craig is just one of the important women honored by the WIA Historical Committee. The Historical Committee was formed to gather historical information about animation by conducting oral interviews with women in the industry who paved the road for women today. These interviews, in addition to supplying important historic information, provide today's women in animation with role models from the past. To date, a total of eighteen women have been interviewed and transcripts of the interviews, along with art donated to Women In Animation, will soon be available to the public at the UCLA Special Arts Library.

Another exciting way to participate in Women In Animation is via the Public Affairs Committee. Public Affairs facilitates the interaction between non-profit groups and the animation industry.



Photo by Elaina Verret

Left to Right: Leigh Godfrey, Jessie Nagel, Babs Parent, Libby Simon

By lending support, contacts and supplies, the goal is to support animation-based programs that benefit people all over the world.

Also, as a benefit of membership Women In Animation/LA screens an independent film made by a WIA member at each quarterly meeting. Originating in LA, the program's primary objective is to provide a much-needed platform for presenting independent work and a place to exchange ideas of the individual in a town where most work is done by a collective.

Women In Animation is very active in conjunction with animation industry events. At the recent World Animation Celebration, for example, WIA presented 45 seminars and six half-day workshops on the principles, business and fundamentals of the animation industry. Additionally, WIA hosted an Independent Filmmaker's Caucus featuring Bill Plympton, Piet Kroon, Paul Vester, Sara Petty, Christine Panushka, George Griffin and moderator Tom Knott. These events were presented in conjunction with ASIFA-Hollywood's Job Expo, which was held at the World Animation Celebration for the first time this year.

Finally, this is a volunteer organization that thrives and grows with member participation, and I invite industry professionals at any level to get involved. If not with Women In Animation, then with other organizations that serve and give to the community. If you work in studio management, establish mentor programs and internships. If you work in the commercial arena, support independent animation. By broadening our horizons and helping others do the same, the animation industry as a whole benefits.

--Jessie Nagel



Donald Segal, Drew Newman, Mark Mothersbaugh
(Panel on Career Opportunities for Composers in Animation)



Linda Jones Clough, Linda Simensky, Fred Seibert
(Panel on The Business of Short Subjects)

Photos by Elaina Verret

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CLARE KITSON

The
World's
Last Great
Patron Of Animators

by Karl Cohen

If you have seen programs of animation from around the world in recent years, you know that some of the most creative animated works for adults are being made in the United Kingdom. With funding for the arts being cut or eliminated in the USA, Canada and other parts of the world, Channel 4 remains the last great patron to offer animators the artistic freedom to explore the medium as a fine art. The person behind this remarkable program that treats animation as a great art form is Clare Kitson.

Kitson has been a Commissioning Editor at Channel 4 since 1989. She works like a book publisher or an executive film producer, to find outstanding material that would otherwise not be seen on TV, to fund it, and to find a format where it can be seen on Channel 4. She is quick to point out that none of the productions are actually done at the TV network's studios and that she is neither a director or animator.

What makes her unique is her ability to make intelligent decisions about what will be exciting for adults who enjoy sophisticated forms of animation, and her skills at finding ways to program her choices once they are completed. She is known for taking risks with new talent and for funding some of Britain's most skilled artists. Her risks sometimes result in exciting and challenging works that win international recognition. As a result of her successes she has traveled to many parts of the globe to serve as a judge and/or to be honored at international film festivals.

Kitson's work has brought Channel 4 many honors. They include a special Cartoon d'Or prize in recognition of the network's outstanding contribution to animation. One film she produced, *Bob's Birthday*, won an Oscar in 1995 for Best Animated Short. Others have won Oscar nominations and top awards at festivals in Eu-

rope, Asia and North America.

When Kitson joined Channel 4 she concentrated on filling gaps in the program schedule where an animated short could be shown. Realizing the difficulty of programming shorts of different lengths this way, she created the half-hour show *Formations*. Since then she has been able to fund other series aimed at mature audiences. The first was *Crapston Villas* (ten 11-minute shows) made with latex puppets. Next came Candy Guard's *Pond Life* (thirteen 11-minute shows), which has a drawn look to it. The pilot was made by hand while the series was computer rendered to cut costs. Her next series will probably be half-hour shows based on Alison Snowden and David Fine's Oscar

winning short *Bob's Birthday*.

Kitson says that since she began developing shows for half-hour and 15 minute time slots the network has asked her to commission other work to fill short gaps between programs, or to be part of programs designed to appeal to minorities. Barry Purvis' magnificent *Screenplay* (Oscar nomination, 1992) was funded not only because it was an innovative project, but due to his use of sign language in the film. Another animated work included deaf jokes that would only appeal to the hearing impaired. *A is for Autism* by Tim Webb was funded to educate people about this learning problem. The work has been shown both as an exceptional work of independent animation and as an educational film



Clare Kitson

at medical conferences. In it kids talk about 'heir symptoms.

Some of the works she funds are the second mature films of people who have recently graduated from animation programs. In England graduate film projects are generally funded by the schools. After someone graduates they may find employment in England's growing animation industry or they can send Channel 4 a proposal for funding for their next personal or independent project.

Some of the young animators who request funds from Kitson have already achieved international recognition. For example, after Mark Baker's student film *The Hill Farm* won an Oscar nomination in 1989, they funded his work *The Village*. It won an Oscar nomination in 1993. Erica Russell's *Feet of Song* won the British Film Institute Award for Best British Animated Short of 1989. Her *Triangle*, funded by Channel 4, won an Oscar nomination in 1994.

Kitson takes all kinds of risk including helping people who want to try out new techniques or formats. Petra Freeman's *Jumping Joan* was made with acrylic paint on plaster. Paul Vestor, who made *Sunbeam* in 1980, received funds to create what may be the first animated documentary. The soundtrack for *Abductees*, 1995, consists of interviews with people who believe they had been abducted by aliens/flying saucers. It won the top prize in animation at the San Francisco International Film Festival in 1996.

Channel 4 works with the British Arts Council to fund 4 to 6 shorts a year. They award a maximum of 20,000 pounds to emerging talent which limits the length of the films. Kitson says you can only do so much animation on this small budget. Kitson and the Arts Council funded Karen Kelly's art based animation, *Stressed*, after her student film *Egoli* ("City of Gold") won a top prize at Annecy. *Stressed* recently won a top prize at the World Animation Celebration in 1997, and it has done well at other festivals. Channel 4 has given Kelly a larger budget for her next work.

Kitson is also involved with a project run through the Museum of the Moving Image in London. The project funds work by recent college graduates. Each year they get 80 to 90 proposals for personal films. They narrow the submissions

down to 12 and then interview the candidates. They eventually select four. Each will work at the museum with a producer for three months on the further development of their storyboards. They will also develop an animation test to show what the project will look like. At the end of the 3 month period the work is evaluated and if all goes well it goes into production. So far 100% of the projects have been funded.

Clare Kitson's appointment as one of Channel 4's Commissioning Editors was based on her prior work in animation. While working by day in market research in London (1968-'70) she worked at night with ASIFA, The International Animation Association, as John Halas' assistant. Next, she joined the film department at the Los Angeles County Museum where she helped develop a film series on the history of American animation. That was followed by a research project on Eastern European animation at the American Film Institute. During this period she developed ties with the Zagreb Animation Festival and other festivals. Before joining Channel 4 she also worked ten years with the National Film Theatre and the London Film Festival. Her duties included programming animation.

Channel 4 began in 1985 as a public service network with a mission to broadcast quality work not shown elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Their funds come from a British tax on advertising. Before Kitson joined the network they had already begun to fund animated projects including work by the Brothers Quay, Jan Svankmajer (co-funding for *Alice*, his first feature), and Aardman Animation. Channel 4 funded Aardman's *Conversation Pieces* series which included Nick Park's *Creature Comforts*.

The next time you get a chance to see a Spike and Mike or Tournee of Animation program at a theatre or on tape, check it out. Several works in these shows were funded by Clare Kitson.

--Karl Cohen

Karl Cohen is an animation historian who heads the San Francisco chapter of ASIFA. Karl is a frequent contributor to ANiMATO! and recently finished his book on censored cartoons and blacklisted animators titled *Forbidden Animation*. (See page 65)



VINTAGE

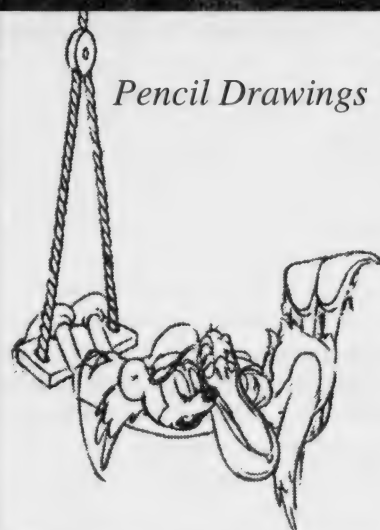
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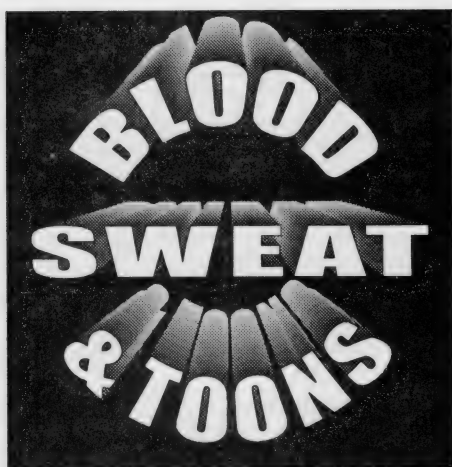
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**An Interview with
Disney Feature Animation President
Peter Schneider**

by Mike Lyons

Talk about taking the ball and running with it. When Peter Schneider, President of Walt Disney Feature Animation, came aboard the studio in 1985, he was charged with producing one new animated feature a year. At the time, morale at the studio was at an all time low, thanks in large part to the frustrating, oft-delayed, production of *The Black Cauldron* and the film's dissappointing returns at the box-office. It's a testament to Schneider's leadership, along with the talents of the numerous Disney artists, that the studio went on to triumph.

A graduate of Purdue University, Schneider had a successful career in New York and Chicago theater before coming to Disney. As President of Walt Disney Feature Animation, Peter has championed the studio's animators, artists, musicians and filmmakers to constantly push the envelope.

Under his tenure, *The Little Mermaid* helped spark a resurgence in the medium, *Beauty and the Beast* made history as the first animated film to be nominated for a Best Picture Oscar and *The Lion King* shattered all previous Disney box-office records. In addition, aesthetic and technical leaps have been made at the studio, evidenced by such films as *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *James and the Giant Peach*, which embraced the traditions of stop-motion and *Toy Story*, which gave a new, warmer face to the much feared realm of computer generated imag-

ery. In the traditional arena, *Aladdin* gave animation a hilarious, contemporary spin, while *Pocahontas* and *Hunchback of Notre Dame* gave the medium a more realistic touch.

This year, the Disney animation juggernaut continued with *Hercules*. Now, with projects lined up past the turn of the century, Peter Schneider, along with Vice President Thomas Schumacher, continues to work tirelessly in inspiring the many artists at the Disney studio to keep pushing that proverbial envelope past its breaking point.

Mike Lyons: First off, Disney's version of the mythological tale, *Hercules*, is not what many people expect, is it?

Peter Schneider: Well, the directors, Ron Clements and John Musker, really have a sense of style and wit about them that they bring to their movies. I think if you look at *The Little Mermaid* or *Aladdin*, you can see that they're really experts in re-interpreting fable-esque things in a unique way. So, they set *Hercules* in mythological times with a Gospel chorus. I mean, how crazy can you get?

But, if you look at it, it makes sense. In the Greek and Roman periods, all of the plays had principals and choruses. I think they [the directors] found a really nice metaphor for today's society in terms of a chorus working really well as chorus/narration.

M.L.: One aspect that's been admired about all the recent Disney animated features is that each one is distinctly different from the previous film. It must be very tempting after the success of a film like *Lion King* to say, 'Well, from now on all of our films are going to be about talking animals.' It must be a real challenge to find the unique and different project for animation.

P.S.: That is something that has always haunted us. One's success sometimes breeds complacency. I have struggled really hard with the artists to make sure that they don't become complacent. I think given the system and the approach we use - i.e. different directors for each of the movies and trying to push the boundaries of what animation is - that no one is satisfied unless they are attempting to push beyond what was done last. Sometimes, these artists reach for the brass ring.

Whether or not they're successful is immaterial; it's the desire and the belief that they can be successful that's really important.

M.L.: What's also interesting is that everything now is still grounded in Walt Disney's legacy. That really has become the foundation for each new Disney film hasn't it?

P.S.: Well, I think it has. As he did, making movies for his time, we make movies for our time. We can't look over our shoulder and say, 'What would Walt have done?' All Walt would have done is tell a great story, fill it with great characters and push the boundaries. As long as we do that, I think we'll make our own personal statement as to what animation is, respecting and honoring the tradition of what Walt did, as well as re-interpreting it.

M.L.: I know that themes and messages are very important when choosing a project at Disney animation. What themes or messages do you hope audiences extract from *Hercules*?

P.S.: Clearly, for me, it's about the fact that it's your interior strength and not your exterior strength that's important. Hercules finds that, within him, his goodness to other people and his belief in other people is really important. It's not about being powerful, mighty and strong. It's about your basic humanity. I think that's what these movies always try and do, which is respect a basic humanity and really celebrate that humanity. I think that's why *Lion King* was so successful, because it was celebrating a fundamental humanization of ourselves; we must be responsible for our society and *Hercules* is responsible for his actions and for who he is and not just his brute strength.

M.L.: The last two Disney features, *Pocahontas* and *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, were stories that one wouldn't expect to see in animation. Some criticized them for being too much like live-action films. *Hercules* seems to be on the other side of the spectrum, or for lack of a better phrase, "more cartoonier." Is Disney moving away from the live-action influence in animated films?

P.S.: Well, I don't personally believe that one should be doing live-action films in animation. I think that one must fundamentally use the medium to do things that only the medium can do, which is invent fantasy characters and really push



Peter Schneider

the boundaries as to what reality is. I have no complaints about *Pocahontas* or *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. They were more realistic and now we're moving away from that, in some sense.

Again, each movie has its own style, its own character, its own boundaries in whatever's right to tell the story. I think *Pocahontas*, for example, was told beautifully within its world. And *Hunchback* is one of my favorite of all the movies we've made. But, are there other ways of doing it? Yes, look at *Hercules*. I think you can't say it should be all one way or the other.

M.L.: You came aboard Disney in 1985. At the time, you had no background in animation and you were charged with making one new animated film a year. Was that terrifying? Exciting? What was that like?

P.S.: If you look at the Disney canon, I believe, before I arrived, *The Black Cauldron* really hit the low point. The refreshing and reassuring aspect I discovered was that no matter what we did in the future it could be no worse than *The Black Cauldron*, in my opinion.

Therefore, it was very freeing in that there was nowhere to go but up. I think

complacent with our art and story telling.

M.L.: As I'm sure you've noticed, many studios are now throwing their hats into the animation ring.

P.S.: [laughing] Gee, I hadn't noticed that.

M.L.: Do you think all of this sudden competition is a good thing?

P.S.: I think it's great. Other people's successes never diminish your own success. I think that's a very important thing one must learn. They do not have to fail for me to be successful and I don't have to fail for them to be successful. Good films will be successful. I think we have to root for the animation industry to always produce great films.

Therefore, while people talk about the competition, it's not necessarily competition per se. What has happened in the past couple of years has been spun as 'My God! They're out to get Disney!' Well, at the end of the day, no one is going to get Disney. They may be very successful in their own right and I'm very happy for them, but Disney has been here for fifty years and it'll be here for fifty more years. It is a brand in the world that I think is unduplicable, as long as we keep making

it's more difficult today, in that there's nowhere to go but down. Everybody's waiting for you to trip and fall, in some sense. And, we're not going to. We may not necessarily make the next \$400 million dollar movie, but we're going to be delivering, over the next ten years, quality, family entertainment in the same vein we've done for the last ten years. Again, not getting complacent. I think that's the one thing we can't do is get

good movies.

M.L.: Well, speaking of Disney's upcoming years, you have some interesting projects lined up at the studio. I was wondering if you could discuss them?

P.S.: Well, we have several different things in production at the moment: *Mulan*, which is the second-century Chinese fairy tale, based on the story of a woman, who dresses as a man and goes off to war to save her father's life, in some sense, as she takes her father's place. I suppose it's the great, fundamental cross-dressing movie of the century [laughs]. But, it really is a departure for us. It's set in an Asian world, which our animation has never been to before.

Then, we have *Tarzan*. I think we'll do it unlike anyone's ever done it before. You will actually see the bonding between man and the apes. It also really explores the issue of, where do I fit in? Where is my family? Is it the people who bring me up or the people I'm born to look like? And, Phil Collins is doing the music for that.

We have John Lasseter doing *Bugs* for us. The same thing he did for toys, he'll do for bugs. It's sort of a fanciful, farcical look at the world of ants and grasshoppers.

We're doing a sequel to *Fantasia*, which is under the direction of Roy Disney. It's really looking at, for the new millennium, how to re-invent what Walt struggled with in the first place, which was that *Fantasia* should be different each time it came out. It was shelved because of the war and because of money. We really want to re-invent what *Fantasia* looks like. There are six new sequences along with the old sequences. And, there are also five other films we're doing, which will be coming out over the next five years.

M.L.: Well, finally, from that day in 1985, when you first came aboard at Disney, through all the changes at the studio, to now, what's the whole ride been like for you?

P.S.: It's been nothing short of exhilarating. It's really been the most satisfying artistic experience of my life; to work with the best people in the world, to be at a company that is so supportive of this particular kind of entertainment and to see such success both commercially and critically. It's been amazing.

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"That's all Folks!"™

by Glenn Anton

Chuck Jones Film Productions is no more. CJFP, the dream factory started in 1993 by the living legend himself, has become another victim of big business. Many Warner Brothers departments have been encountering major cutbacks as Time Warner attempts to bring down the debt it is now faced with since its recent merger.

"It's not that Warner Brothers doesn't like what they're doing at CJFP," explained an unnamed source. "It's that they don't have the money for animated shorts right now. CJFP is a luxury, and their films don't bring in direct revenue. Because of that, they are not a high priority."

But the question should be brought up: Why hasn't CJFP been made a high priority?

Anyone monitoring CJFP would see they have been making leaps and bounds in the right direction. After 20th Century Fox utilized Jones to create the animated short for the film, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, the Warner Brothers ^{execs} took notice. Warner Brothers saw a wonderful opportunity in having Jones kickstart an animation production company. It was a situation they should have taken advantage of ... but didn't.

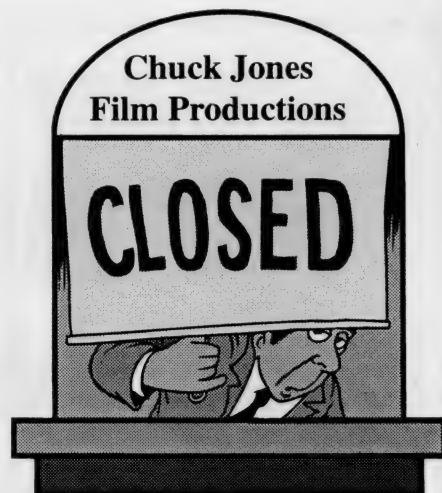
They signed Jones to a contract and the newly formed CJFP staff went to work making cartoon shorts in the traditional hand-animating style. Much of the rookie staff was still wet behind the ears and in need of experience to hone their skills. As the shorts were completed, the evolutionary progress of CJFP could be seen. *Chariots of Fur*, *Another Froggy Evening*, *Superior Duck*, and *From Hare to Eternity* were directed by Jones. *Pullet Surprise* was directed by Darrell Van Citters. *Father of the Bird*, the last short completed by CJFP, was directed by Steve Fossati. Although yet to be released in

theaters, *Father of the Bird* is considered the best production by those who've screened it.

By showing the CJFP cartoons, Warner Brothers was doing something nice for the audiences attending their films. The public has always enjoyed the tradition of watching a cartoon prior to the feature film, and the revival of the tradition was a welcome change to the otherwise dull, vanilla flavored experience of present day movie watching. Warner Brothers had taken a step in the right direction.

But now, by closing CJFP and denying the availability of its cartoons to theaters, Warner Brothers managed to fumble the ball. They have sent a somber message to the audiences. The message says: We don't want to provide you a moment of laughter in a troubled world! It says: All we want you to do is watch the trailers for our upcoming films! What it doesn't say is: Thank you for coming to see our film. To show our appreciation, here's a cartoon that will hopefully help you forget your troubles for a moment and put a smile on your face!

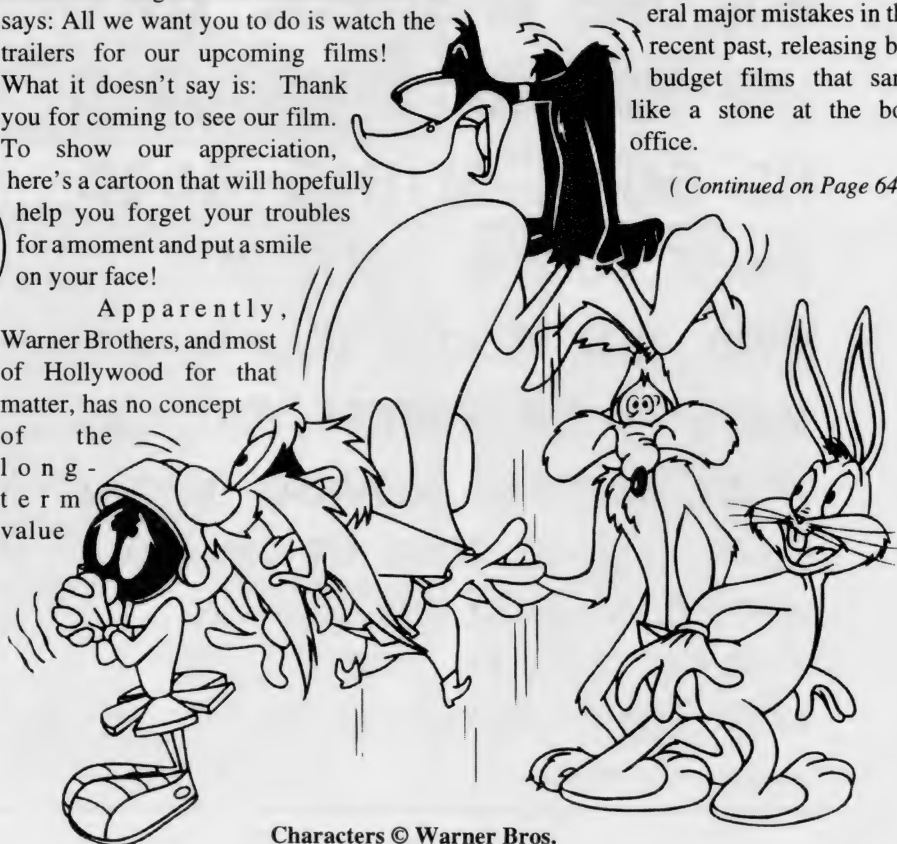
Apparently, Warner Brothers, and most of Hollywood for that matter, has no concept of the long-term value



of animated productions. The studios are owned and run by major corporate executives and their stockholders. The studios are run by caretakers who have to answer to those stockholders on a "bottom line" quarterly basis. CJFP was placed in the precarious position of turning out a product that had no immediate direct income value. But the value of its productions down the road could have been immense. It cost \$700,000 to produce a single CJFP short and there was no Warner Brothers strategy to make that money back on the quarter to quarter basis.

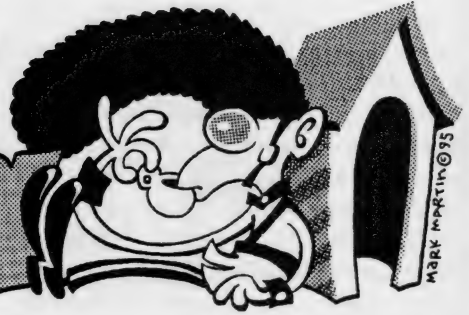
Warner Brothers has made several major mistakes in the recent past, releasing big budget films that sank like a stone at the box office.

(Continued on Page 64)



Characters © Warner Bros.

Tons of Teatime



by Andrew Osmond

British correspondent Andrew Osmond looks at some new books and Cosgrove-Hall's ambitious *Discworld* series.

-I've seen the infinite. It's nothing special.
-All right, what did it look like?
-It's blue. -It's black.
-It's blue -It's black.
-It's blue. Trust me on this.
Soul Music, Part One.

A couple of snippets before the main course. First, and most irrelevant, those who've endured my censorship musings may be interested in the fate of Cronenberg's *Crash*, which caused a Brit storm rivalling *Natural Born Killers*. A common soundbite was that *Crash* was 'beyond depravity', although the Daily Mail more revealingly added that *Crash*'s characters 'lose inhibitions and experiment pleasurably with gay sex, lesbian sex and sex with cripples (sic).' There's not much to add to that, except that *Crash* was released uncut in June, only to be banned by councils in Scotland and Central London.

Another disturbing sex film caused less of a ruckus. Jan Svankmajer's Brit-funded *Conspirators of Pleasure* had an arthouse run to good reviews, with the director writing a long piece on pleasure machines (use your imagination) for a major London 'zine. I'm loath to evaluate it - I'd need a degree in surrealist theory to do it justice - but like *Faust* I admired more than liked the film. As noted last issue, the 'plot' - a framework for stream-of-consciousness routines - revolves round Czech citizens with odd fetishes, most memorably a (bona fide) newscaster aroused by live salmon. *Conspirators* is very funny - the audience I was with was roaring with laughter - but has some horrible moments: in one

scene a whipcracking sadist animates a naked stop-frame doll, only to gleefully torture it to death. The animation is sparse but impressive, especially the pixilated actor rushing round woodlands in a rooster suit. (I don't make this stuff up!)

part of the ongoing *Art and Design* journal, designated 'Profiles 53'). As well as Park, the book covers Svankmajer's *Alice*, Disney, Terry Gilliam, abstract Brit animator Erica Russell and my own hero Hayao Miyazaki. From a quick skim, the



Scene from *Conspirators of Pleasure*

For those who haven't heard already, the new Nick Park/Jake Eberts feature (Issue #36) is called *Chicken Run*, now well into production. The plot, described as a fowl *Great Escape*, has two chickens (not disguised penguins) fleeing the cruelties of their poultry farm.

Park is one of several animators interviewed in a new Brit book, *Art and Animation*, edited by Dr. Paul Wells and published in America by John Wiley. (It's

text looks ferociously academic and some of the analysis suspect (or maybe that's my anti-Freudian bias). However, it's handsomely presented, the interviews are solid and it certainly covers a fair chunk of the toon spectrum.

Another new Brit book is the mammoth *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, Orbit's follow-up to the *Encyclopedia of SF*, now a definitive genre work. The chief editors of the new tome are John Clute, renowned

SF critic, and John Grant, who readers may recognise as the writer of another reference work, *Disney's Encyclopedia of Animated Characters*. Unsurprisingly Grant pens most of the cartoon entries as well as contributing to a six-page Disney profile, which includes such minutiae as *Fluppy Dogs* and the Dutch *Donald Duck* strips. Be warned: Grant is opinionated and some of his views had me gibbering with rage (*Tintin* undistinguished? *Cool World* a classic?). The coverage of TV shows and shorts is patchy, although the feature entries range from the '93 *Little Nemo* to Maurizio's *Volere Volare* and the Bolex Brothers' *Tom Thumb*. Shamefully though, the book omits Will Vinton and claims *Thief and the Cobbler* was never finished.

And so on to *Discworld*, the new release from Cosgrove Hall, (now officially biggest toon studio in Europe), and one of the most-awaited 'toons of recent times. Well, most-awaited in Britain. You see, the *Discworld* is something of a Brit institution. For those who've forgotten, it's a series of comedy/fantasy novels by Terry Pratchett, which allegedly accounts for 1% of UK book sales. That's a lot of sales, and a lot of tie-in potential. Some issues back I raved about C-H's stop-motion *Truckers* series, based on a more marginal Pratchett story. With hindsight, it was inevitable the studio would take the Pratchett juggernaut full on.

So is the *Discworld* toon anything special? Arguably yes, if only because it's the kind of mix still little-known in Western animation. It's populist and story-driven; it's made to appeal to children, teenagers and adults: it has the resources of a major studio behind it; it sustains a plot over two-to-three hours; and, like the books, it has the kind of in-jokes that go beyond fashions and pop-culture. (Some of which are decidedly literary: I don't often come across throw-away gags about Dylan Thomas or *Waiting for Godot*). Of course, many series have these individual features, but few have all five: a fact reflected in *Discworld* being screened in a rare non-kids' slot on Sunday afternoons.

Describing the *Discworld* phenomenon is like trying to summarise *Doctor Who* or *Star Trek*: different parts appeal to different fans, for different reasons. The *Discworld* itself is a flat world, travelling

through space on the back of a turtle. On this world live dragons, trolls, dwarves, wizards and sundry other beings. Such a scenario suggests either a parody or a rip-off of a famous Tolkien novel: Pratchett's achievement (at best) is to go well beyond either. Yes, his books mock the *Dungeons and Dragons* clichés of heroic fantasy, but Pratchett also uses the *Discworld* framework to examine - and spoof - any number of worldlier subjects, from cinema (*Moving Pictures*) and opera (*Maskerade*) to feminism (*Equal Rites*) and religion (*Small Gods*). Of the two novels adapted by Cosgrove Hall, *Wyrd Sisters* combines the plots of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* to surreal effect, while *Soul Music* introduces the *Disc* to a whole new sound, the controversial *Music With Rocks in*.

Despite their popularity, the *Discworld* books are an acquired taste and this is doubly true of the series. It's not (as I first believed), a model animation 'a la *Truckers*, but neither does it visually resemble former CH shows *Dangermouse* and *Duckula*. The titles boast very impressive CGI images of Great A'tuin, the *Discworld*-bearing star-turtle, with the imaginary camera zooming round, over and under the creature. It's a great front-end, and shows computers can make something more organic than *Reboot* cityscapes. The in-show animation is very different, described by one critic as the Brit equivalent of anime. That is to say, the backgrounds and characters are highly detailed, especially for TV, but the movement is disconcertingly jerky. Whether the trade-off is worth it is up to the viewer to decide: personally, I would trade some background patterning for a little more fluidity. It's also a shame that *Music* and *Sisters* open with very underwhelming animation, highlighted by the segue from the computer-generated credits.

Visuals aside, the two serials fare very differently. On *Wyrd Sisters* (six 25-minute parts), I must admit it was never my favourite Pratchett book, and I was surprised that CH chose it for adaptation. The serial is very competent (although some of the character designs were too caricatured for my liking), and it's significant for the reasons given above. It's just rather static and unexciting. The story revolves round three bickering witches labelled by a Shakespeare playwright: there's also a thes-

pian heir-to-the-throne, a wicked duke and his Lady Macbeth wife (a splendid performance by Elanor Bron). It's talky: Pratchett's dialogue is one of his strongest assets, with Bron only one of several high-class actors in the voice-cast. Unfortunately, to quote one reviewer, one does think of a radio-play with added pictures (a complaint levelled at another Brit adaptation, Rosen's *Watership Down*). *Wyrd Sisters* is certainly distinctive, but it's the kind of show you can 'watch' with your eyes shut most of the time. Best bit: Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers flitting through the playwright's dreams.

Soul Music (seven parts) is a much livelier affair, albeit a confusing one. It's worth taping the first episode and watching it twice just to straighten out the tangled storylines. These involve the aforementioned *Music With Rocks In* and the *Disc*'s first rock star Imp y Celyn ('Bud of the Holly', though everyone thinks he's selfish). Like all music legends, Imp's fame has a price: he's destined to die young in a blaze of glory. Death Himself (a cloaked skeleton who rides a horse called Binky) has gone AWOL, leaving his human teenage granddaughter to do 'the Duty'. There's a snag: - Susan Death's love for Imp, who is in any case beyond the mortal coil. "There's rhythm in his soul," says Death ominously, as *Music With Rocks In* slowly takes Imp over.

It's an involved plot, but that's often an advantage - the cross-cutting, fast-moving, multi-viewpoint tale has a pace and rhythm (!) that *Wyrd Sisters* sorely lacks. *Soul Music*'s other main assets are Christopher Lee, simply stunning as an eternity-weary Death; and a string of great verbal gags which sustain rather than overwhelm the story. (Just wait for Imp's comment about 'cheeses'!). There are faults, of course; too many supporting characters, some plain annoying (especially the 'groupie' wizards) while the climax, confusing enough in the book, is well-nigh incoherent on screen. That said, *Soul Music* - once you get past the odd 'look' - is splendid fun and worth seeing for anyone who likes fantasy, comedy and/or rock 'n' roll. More *Discworld* animations are expected in the next few years and frankly, I can't wait.

--Andrew Osmond





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THE CANTINFLAS CHRONICLES

by Harry McCracken & Kip Williams

(For this issue's column, Harry joins forces with a co-author, fellow obscure-cartoon fanatic Kip Williams.)

Until now, this column has been plenty busy covering weird, forgotten cartoons produced in the United States over the past seventy years. This issue, however, we go south of the border to take a look at the animated efforts of Mexico's greatest film comedian, Mario Moreno Reyes (1911-1993) — better known as Cantinflas.

If we gringos remember Cantinflas at all, it's most likely for his supporting role as Passepartout in Mike Todd's 1956 version of *Around the World in 80 Days* or perhaps for his one U.S. starring vehicle, 1960's *Pepe*. (The latter film failed to give the Mexican comedian a toehold in the U.S. market, despite being quite possibly the most celebrity-packed film of all time; the cast featured Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Jimmy Durante, Judy Garland, Jack Lemmon, Greer Garson, Andre Previn, Tony Curtis, Sammy Davis Jr., Janet Leigh, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Shirley Jones, Peter Lawford, Dean Martin, Hedda Hopper, Ernie Kovacs, Edward G. Robinson, Ann B. Davis, Debbie Reynolds, Cesar Romero, Joey Bishop, Bobby Darin, Billie Burke and Jay "Dennis the Menace" North, among others.

In Mexico, however, Cantinflas was an enduring superstar from the 1930s until the 1980s. And just like a lot of U.S. comedians — Laurel and Hardy, the Three Stooges, Jerry Lewis — he lent his visage and schtick to an animated series, which was variously known as *Cantinflas Show*, *Amigo and Friends* or *Cantinflas y Sus*

Amigos. At least those are the titles it goes by on the Spanish-language cable channel Univision, which currently airs Cantinflas cartoons (produced by Estudios Moro) as part of a Saturday morning grab-bag called *La Loca Pinata*.

We know nothing about the background of these shorts, and aren't even sure when they were made (the humor and general atmosphere suggests that they're products of the early 1970s). Most of the films make some pretense at being vaguely educational: Cantinflas usually learns some facts about world history or culture, and often delivers a moral at cartoon's end. The titles tend to be generic enough that you can figure them out without any knowledge of Spanish — "En El Japon," "Romeo y Julia," "Robinson Crusoe," "Madrid," "Einstein," and the like.

So are these films merely pedagogical little dramas? Far from it. The cartoon Cantinflas — an appealing, monkey-faced little dude — smokes, chases girls, and drifts through history, usually with no visible means of support. Unlike his fellow time travelers Mr. Peabody and Sherman, Cantinflas is just *there*, with no explanation of just how he bounces from century to century and continent to continent (often more than once during the course of a single six-minute cartoon).

The cartoons' Fleischer-like obsession with the female figure is perhaps their most distinguishing characteristic. Even when Cantinflas is busy learning about whatever country or century he finds himself in, he's never too busy to flirt with anything in (or occasionally out of) a skirt. Abstraction of the feminine body tends toward a pipelike torso and plenty of cleavage; female faces are usually reduced to stylized, wide-eyed make-up and almost nothing else, like a Kewpie doll. There's a fair amount of toplessness, tempered by absence of nipples.

As that suggests, these cartoons — like all the best ones — seem to have been made to tickle the funny bone of their own creators. It's easy to imagine that they were popular with Mexican kids, but they never pander to an adult's idea of what a child might find entertaining. And although they were presumably produced for whatever the Mexican equivalent of Saturday morning television is, they don't have the mass-produced feel of nearly all U.S. TV animation — the artwork is limited but often quite lively, with loose, likable character designs. (Those of us without much knowledge of the Mexican cartooning tradition will probably be reminded of the work of Sergio Aragones.)

The cartoons we describe above might be deemed Cantinflas Classic. Others in the series — later ones, apparently — were produced by a couple of *Yanquis* known as Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera, and if you're familiar with any H-B product of the late 1970s and early 1980s, you can pretty much envision what they're like. Cantinflas still looks more or less like himself, but both the comedian and the films have a tired look. There's no raunchy humor, and the quirky artwork of the earlier films is replaced by standard-issue Hanna-Barbera character designs. It's a little like the difference between an Otto Messmer Felix the Cat silent cartoon and a Joe Oriolo Felix of the 1960s.

Herewith, capsule reviews of four Cantinflas animated extravaganzas. Take note that Kip speaks only some Spanish, and Harry's knowledge of the language is so rudimentary that he has trouble following Speedy Gonzales cartoons. Would we like these cartoons more or less if we always knew exactly what was going on? We may never know.

Harry McCracken is one of the ANiMATO! originals, and loves obscure cartoons.

MUSEO ANTROPOLOGICO

Cantinflas watches as a female tour guide escorts a group of tourists through exhibits featuring the pre-Columbian history of his land, starting with stylized *indios* carving their stone gods. There's a nudie cutie who seems to be modelling, but they ignore her: the natives carve gods, and Cantinflas idolizes himself. The tourists are duly impressed by the ancient gods, all except for an obvious Yankee who keeps saying "I don't believe it." Each time he does, Cantinflas gives the idol a "Lights, Camera: Action!" cue, and another whammy is put on the doubting *gringo*. It's a mere inconvenience when a divine rain shrinks his clothes, but when the god of the dead reduces him to a skeleton, his doubtfulness becomes truly inexplicable. When he's still unconvinced by a rain of fishes, the agriculture god pulls out the big weapon: *salsa picante* on a taco turns the doubting skeleton into a flaming believer, and when he bows to the old gods, another rain restores him. His clothes are still shrunk: for humility? Cantinflas delivers some moral, but the real lesson here is: **Revere The Ancient Ones! Or else!**

--K.W.

CLEOPATRA

The title barely hints at the ground this short epic covers: beginning in the fog of England, we see the start of the Suffragist movement, jumping ahead to the "mod" scene of London's Carnaby Street where Cantinflas (here's an archetypal 1960s joke) just can't tell the girls from the boys, because they parade about in near-identical pairs. A brief detour to the Garden of Eden, where little big-nosed Adam succumbs to kewpie-cute (and naked) Eve's apple while the angel is lighting his sword. Now we finally cut to Egypt, where Cleopatra, with an ultra-stylized birdish face that denotes ultimate femininity in this series, parades her beauty, and bathes (naked, of course) in *leche de burra*. Cantinflas drinks a little from an ewer, and sprouts big ears. Taking a break from Asterix, *Julio Caesar* enters and is promptly smitten with Cleo's minimalist features. He woos her on a barge, scrubs her back in the bath, and gives her horsie rides until he

collapses. It doesn't take *Sigmundo Freud* to see why Caesar promptly sails away. His place is taken by *Marco Antonio*. Regretfully, my Spanish is not up to the task of translating the complex moral Cantinflas gives us, so I don't know what I have learned from this cartoon, but it's a real favorite of mine.

--K.W.



Cantinflas by Bob Rounkle/El Maestro Studio/Ibiza

NAVIDAD

This holiday mini-special has it all: music, merriment, tradition, tobacco products, and a much healthier dose of religion than you'd see in a stateside production. As Cantinflas trudges through the snow, Santa passes by; Cantinflas, mistaking him for a cab driver, hops a ride on his sleigh. We then segue into a series of Christmassy interludes starring Cantinflas and a troupe of toy-like, brightly garbed children — the general effect is one of Disneyland's *It's a Small World* ride gone haywire. They chirp festive songs, bash open a pinata, and engage in the Mexican ritual of taking a figurine of the Virgin Mary from house to house, seeking shelter.

An adorable, well-scrubbed Baby Jesus makes a cameo appearance; Cantinflas serenades him on the trumpet. Towards the end, Santa reappears to parcel out gifts to the boys and girls, so Cantinflas puts out the cigarette he's been smoking and feigns goo-goo noises in order to get a present. The kids then form a choir to sing a snippet of the Hallelujah Chorus, and the cartoon

closes with Cantinflas's heartfelt, bilingual seasons' greetings: "Feliz Navidad, Merry Christmas, and Happy New York! (sic)"

--H.M.

SUPER AGENTE 777

Years before *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*, Cantinflas starred in his own racy James Bond parody. As the film opens in swinging London, our hero accidentally makes a pass at a kilted Scotsman. Next, he spots a couple of sexy British policewomen and introduces himself as a Mexican secret agent. Instantly swoony, the lady cops cry — in English — "Mexico! The land of romance!" and plaster him with smooches. (Except for that line, these British law enforcers speak mostly in what seems to be a mocking approximation of Cockney-accented Spanish.) From there on, the plot gets increasingly difficult to discern. Senor Flas and a ravishing, purple-haired female spy get sent to Paris, apparently on a mission to discover what happened to the Venus de Milo's arms. They visit the Lido and the Louvre and discuss French culture and Greek art; one suspects that this is

mostly an excuse to show dancing girls and topless statues. Eventually, Cantinflas finds Venus's arms and reassembles her — it turns out that she's swinging a baseball bat. The triumphant agent says something suggestive to his co-spy — just what, I'm not sure, but he assures her that it's *Muy carnale*. She responds by shouting "Darling!" and jumping him, and this confusing but amusing spoof irises out.

--H.M.



Kip Williams is a Newport News animation fan and writer.

IAN SVANKMAJER'S STATE OF MAGIC

Candid conversation with Czech surrealistic artist
Jan Svankmajer.

by Wendy Hall

When accepting an award this May at the San Francisco Film Festival, Jan Svankmajer, though appreciative of the reverence being poured out for him, was not exactly lapping it up. Like some revered artists, upon meeting their public they struggle awkwardly to get along with that stranger known as the public self, someone Svankmajer isn't too interested in knowing. Not to say that he is unwelcoming - he is just reserved, serious and quite contradictory to his work, gentle. At least that is how he seemed. He knows no English, so when we spoke it was always through the echo of his interpreter. Befitting to his personality, Svankmajer looked a little displaced amidst the publicity and attention that orbited around him during his visit.

"I was especially pleased to hear," he said during his recipient speech, "I was to receive an award under such a specific title..."

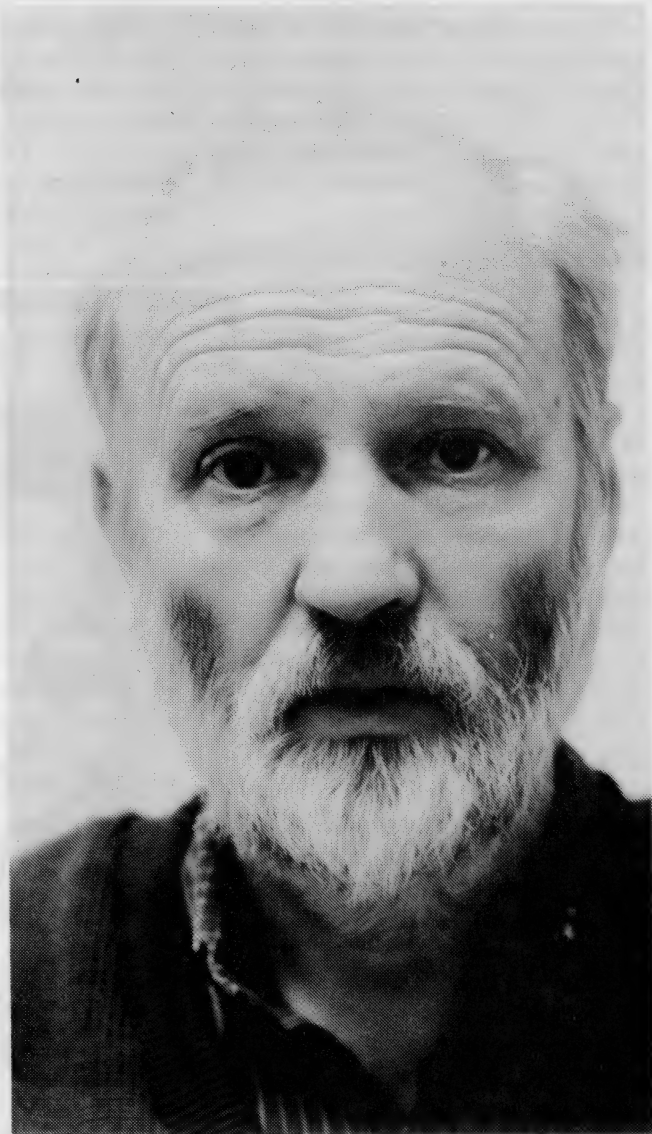
Persistence of Vision - That was the title, the first of its kind, bestowed upon the Czech film maker. Yes it is a specific and also a very appropriate accolade, the perfect blue ribbon to pin on someone whose vision has made deep notches in film making, in surrealism and whether he prefers it or not, in animation.

An animator - that is his predominant job title. The BBC documentary about him is entitled Jan Svankmajer, The Animator of Prague. If you wanted to track him down at a video store, he will most likely be

under animation. And at this year's festival his award was given by an animator. During his introduction, he was referred to as Jan Svankmajer, an animator who has created a significant place in animation, which isn't entirely inaccurate. Yet literally speaking, an animator's shoes he seldom wears. It is scarcely acknowledged but the major segment of his animated work was animated by someone else. Animation is merely a component of his vision, acclaimed not for being technically impeccable, but for its staggering affect.

For someone whose art has evolved through film and animation, Svankmajer's beginnings weren't particularly rooted in either craft. He developed the foundation for his very distinct aesthetic while directing puppet and mask theater in Prague. (A city where, in a strange result of cultural history and recent commercialism, marionettes are now pawned as tourist trinkets.) However, his career there was rather succinct. "I didn't find my public," he remarked to me.

Yet what he did find was his first exposure to film making and what was going to become an ongoing love affair



with the inanimate object. Puppetry and mask theater is a way in which the puppets and the actors are forced to give a pulse to wood, paint, plaster. However, this concept of merely giving life to the lifeless isn't really accurate nor whole enough for Svankmajer. He feels objects, like a sponge, absorb the life that surrounds them and therefore have a very valid vitality of their own. (Which might account for the fact that masks and puppets, particularly ones with a few years to them, have the tendency to cause a little heart-quickening. If one follows Svankmajer's belief, puppets and masks, vessels for life, play a similar role to a ghost.) Animation is a way of casting light upon this connectivity between people and objects Svankmajer feels we have buried into dormancy.



Nothing to be afraid of. Merely a puppet from *Faust*

Wendy Hall: Although you aren't strictly an animator you've obviously had a consistent relationship with it. What has attracted you to animation over and over again as a means of expressing yourself?

Jan Svankmajer: I can characterize animation shortly as magic. I use it in my films that way. That means that I'm not trying to just make inanimate objects alive. But I try to make objects alive in the real sense of the word. So there is a certain psychological moment in it. Not only technical. In the moment where we attempt to bring objects to life we can communicate with them (the objects) in certain ways. At the moment we find ourselves in a state of magic. Our ancestors were probably able to bring objects alive only through their inner workings. And my understanding is that it was through certain forms of magic. Therefore the animation for me substitutes for something our ancestors didn't need at all. It is my understanding that the vast majority of animators use their technique, the animation technique to bring the objects alive for a technical movement. They are a prisoner of their own technical abilities. They fail to recognize the psychological moment of the animation.

W.H: Do you feel that's a problem with all / most of the animators working?

J.S: Of course not all of them. Too many animators become enamored by the way they achieve a certain technique and they totally fail to bring any content to their work. So the technical part of the idea, of the animation, becomes most important to them than any kind of message they would convey. My own process is exactly the opposite. In the beginning it's the idea that I would like to convey or express than I find the means to convey. Therefore some of my films are fully animated others are just partly animated and the rest of them aren't animated at all. Because the animation is not the most important thing in my work. The content of the idea that I'm trying to express requests certain mediums to be used according to what the expression is about.

W.H: Could you tell me about how you evolved from working with puppetry and masks to animation and how you see both of those art forms as being connected?

J.S: I started as a director in a theater and I didn't study film I just studied theater. I worked in puppet theater and a theater of masks. Now, compared to films, theater has one great disadvantage. It needs to reach the viewer of a particular era. It cannot count on future generations to discover what an incredible genius the author of the play was. They have to touch the

particular audience at that time because they are the only ones who've come into the theater. Because that theater is active at that particular moment in front of that particular audience. I have to admit that with my theater form I didn't attract a great audience. What I was doing in the theater the viewers didn't want to see. People would leave during the performance. They were shocked. So I didn't find my public.

W.H: They were shocked by?

J.S: You need to understand the time period in which this was. We were going through the time where the art form was a social reality. So I would get these viewers who were raised on a certain kind of aesthetic. And they were not raised in this particular form of theater. Accidentally I met someone in the theater who worked in the *Laterna Magika*. Which is a theater that combines theatrical expressions with film. That was the first place where I actually started working with film. I collaborated in a show that was a combination of two similar short pieces and that was how I actually first started doing movies. The film was made independently but was still part of the performance. Nevertheless the technique I used in that film was the same type of technique one uses in any film, there I had the opportunity to learn what means cut, camera, lighting, etc. I left *Laterna*



A scene from *Conspirators of Pleasure*

Magika after two seasons. So at that point I already knew the basics of film. By coincidence I happened upon a studio that had money to make a short feature because a director had left. So they were looking for someone who would take it upon himself to do it, to work on it and complete it. So I wrote the screenplay and I showed it to them and they approved it. It was actually based on one of my theatrical creations which failed to appear previously. There were actors in masks and puppets and then this way my experience with film was really borne. The film was *The Last Trick*, one of the shorts shown during the screening. That was in 1964. This film uses the particular theme of actors in masks which is a technique of so-called black theater. All the actors are dressed entirely in black. In front of them there is a light screen. They are behind that light screen and they also have behind them a black background they are putting lighted objects in this light screen. They take particular objects and extend those objects where the light is so the viewer can see those objects. So the viewer feels the objects are moving by themselves. The audience cannot see the actor because the actor is indistinguishable from the background because everything is black. All they see is the objects just moving in the air by themselves on the stage. It's a very well known technique of magic that magicians use as well. And it is used for this first film of mine in the few scenes that are truly animated. The tech-

nique itself of this so-called black theater comes very close to animation in a sense. Of course after that I started making more animated movies. With that first feature, I was given credibility.

W.H: Could you elaborate more on your relationship with materials and objects?

J.S: Objects are very important. But I don't work with just any objects. I only work with objects which I happen to come across. So I don't really look for objects for a film. But I look for objects which I then use to make a film. So I'm a collector, but not a collector of high priced objects. I don't have a high valued collection. I collect things that might be worthless. But I feel that they have some content. So that comes back to magic. Everything around us has its own life. Even inanimate objects. Because a life was put into them by people who had contact with it. Now I'm sure you know from your own experience that you touch the same object every time in a slightly different way. It depends on what kind of mood you are in at that time. You can take the same objects into your hand with a great love. At another time you can just throw the object because you were angry. The emotions which are present in us at the moment become part of those objects we touch. Those moments, those emotions have been printed into them. At the same time it can be said for example

that the object is a testament to all the events that take place in the environments that they are in and have been in, a funeral, crime, murder, wedding. All the events are imprinted in those objects. Therefore I very much prefer old objects to new ones. Because the new ones, they don't have any content. The same particular idea relates to my objection to computer animation. Because the objects are created artificially and have no content or soul as new objects. I believe that under certain circumstances objects which are charged and contain emotion are able to reveal those emotions. Specifically when people are in a frame of mind or certain sensibility when this communication between their emotional state and the quote unquote emotional state of the object are conveyed. This is the reason that I use very particular objects in my film and it is my wish and intention that the objects will reveal the kind of content and emotions and expressions that I know is in them and that will affect the viewer. That is where I see magic in animation. In that sense you can compare an animator to a shaman.

[*The Child Receives A Lesson in 1/24 of A Second....* - title of short by Brother's Quay dedicated to Jan Svankmajer]

"Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas - only I don't exactly know what they are," says Alice after reading *Jabberwocky*, the illogical poem from *Through the Looking Glass*.

A similar answer might be given to Svankmajer's 1971 short with the same title. Or Svankmajer's first full length, *Alice*. Much of Svankmajer's work could be responded to that way, particularly the shorter films that stab ruthlessly away at reason and logic. However muddled Alice's reaction sounds, it is actually the precise stimulation a surrealist is looking for. When making *Un Chien Andalou* with Salvador Dali, Bunuel, father of surrealist cinema, vowed that "No idea or image that might lend itself to a rational explanation of any kind would be accepted."

Surreal is a word that is often used flippantly - to often understood as the antitheses of real, something separate from reality. Surrealism is, quite basically, an attempt to express the workings of the subconscious as well as that mental nether world itself. Like all true surrealist artists, Svankmajer's work is always loyal to the

minds landscape. Yet he does not merely probe the murky swamps of the subconscious for the sake of discovering what lies there. Svankmajer is interested in an expression that is carried out by the same language and logic of that subterranean part of our minds. If the subconscious is like an engine, with certain wires, springs and energies that make it move, than the surrealist artist's job is to simply lift off the lid, remove the parts and apply it to his expression. The surrealist's language and the language of dreams are from the same continent of the psyche, where images do not require rationalism and order to have meaning. After reading *Jabberwocky*, Alice continues to say, "However, somebody killed something that's clear at any rate." Articulation is still absent, yet the meaning of what she has read by no means escapes her.

Consequently, when one is exposed to a surrealist's work, he may find himself in the same lap of bewilderment and understanding as Alice was in. Forcing his audience into an understanding that is illogical and reducing it to such an infantile perception as Alice's would be an ideal result for Svankmajer. He considered Lewis Carroll to be "one of the precursors to surrealism,"

and while making *Alice*, he wanted, through animation, "to bring back the imagery of childhood back to life and give it its credibility." Childhood is a delicate time to Svankmajer, not because he views children as living in some sort of sterilized innocence, but because children's consciousness is raw and unformed. This consequently allows them less restricted access to their psyche. Consequently they are more apt to understanding their imagination - which is what Svankmajer means when he urges adults to be open to an infantile mind set. Suppressing and disregarding it as we mature, we grow to view childhood as something which is over, a part of us that is not alive. Which is parallel to how we acknowledge or rather don't acknowledge our dreams. Svankmajer feels people discard dreams into a "rubbish dump

of our psyches." Piling childhood and dreams into a place that is not a part of our lives incapacitates and limits our knowledge of existence.

Understanding this mesh of associations - between childhood, surrealism, subconscious, dreams - is the beginning of bringing lucidity to Svankmajer's very complicated body of work. It also helps us realize why he will inevitably make films that concern themselves with childhood, like *Jabberwocky* and *Down to the Cellar*, and children's stories like *Alice*. (His next film to begin production next year, *Otesnak*,



Down To The Cellar

is based on an old Czech fairy tale.)

Svankmajer's films are often called strange, bizarre. Although it is unintentional, describing his films that way is ultimately an insult to his surrealist mission. What bizarre and strange implies is something that is foreign, removed from our lives. What Svankmajer's work has incessantly tried to do is reveal a very vital part of ourselves that we don't want to look at. Such remarks essentially validate his frustrations.

W.H: The imagery of childhood has played a large role in your work. You've said you've always been interested in having a dialogue with your childhood. Could you just talk about why you are drawn to childhood and also how you conduct that dialogue in your work.

J.S: *Childhood is not just important for me it is important for every single person. Because that is where our future personality, as a child, is created. However, later the vast majority of people are so affected by civilization which in fact suppresses all kinds of habits from childhood. Therefore the vast majority of the population think that childhood is something that is long behind them. But in fact the child in us is always present. A lot of people do not want to think about it. They either try to forget or they just look at it as a form of nostalgia.*

But I feel my childhood to be extremely present and alive all the time. Not only do I conduct an ongoing dialogue with my childhood but it is a never-ending source of inspiration for me. Because the strongest experiences of contact with the outside world are contained in one's childhood. Because in our childhood our very first experiences and contacts occur. It is when we first find out what means a chair, a bird, a table or anything else. Any other time would always be a second time. We all understand that the first contact with something or someone which is un-

known is always the strongest. It makes the strongest impression and therefore I always try to involve all these strong experiences from childhood and build and create my films upon this foundation.

W.H: You once said that *Down to the Cellar* was your most autobiographical piece, is that still true and if so why?

J.S: *One of the strongest sources of the imagination is fear. In Czech there is a saying that says that 'fear has big eyes.' In my own childhood we had that kind of cellar in our house and my mother frequently asked me to go down there to fetch potatoes or something. I was always so fearful of that. If I had to define what it was I was so afraid of I wouldn't be able to tell you. It was just a pure fear. So on the way*



Actor Petr Cepek trapped in a compelling composition from *Lekce Faust*

down the stairs to the cellar I was trying to realize at least some of those fears. At the time when I was being sent down to the cellar when I was six or seven and if I were asked what it was I was really afraid of I wouldn't be able to point this out. But the feeling of the strong fear that I had at the time - I can still feel it today.

Conspirators of Pleasure, Svankmajer's latest release, does something that all his films do yet branches into whole new ter-

"Disney + Bunuel = Svankmajer's ALICE"



Video box art from *Alice*

ritory. Like all his work, it brings into light something we hide from ourselves and suppress. Unlike anything previous, it is a film strictly about sexual pleasure, and as far as Svankmajer is aware of, the only film about sex that does not have any intercourse or for that matter, any mutual contact. Set in modern day Prague, six ordinary and secretly seedy people obsessively and painstakingly prepare to fulfill their sexual fantasies, which are all solitary expeditions. Each person journeys along the road of his own fastidious concoctions, resulting in climatic fantasies which are carried out by Svankmajer's animated sequences. Like *Faust* it is the animated segments of the film that are the most enticing to watch. The rest of *Conspirators of Pleasure*, though humorous, is mainly build-up.

Remaining within the mode of surrealist humor, Svankmajer's latest cinematic offering intends to rebel against culture's construction of reality. "They're fixated on this sense of pleasure and refuse the sense of reality," opposite to their society's oppressive wishes. Like his animated objects, Svankmajer's characters are coercing us to embrace what lies in the recesses of our conscious. In this case it is sex, a force that is aggressive as much as it is repressed.

W.H: Does the relationship you have with objects parallel with the relationships that the characters in *Conspirators of Pleasure* relate to objects?

J.S: In this particular film it is a little different in subject because the basis of this film is eroticism. But of course in this film the objects play an extremely important role. There is a relationship between people and objects as an erotic relationship. There is one character in it who creates his own tactile object in the realm of masochism. Which he then uses to massage his own body so in reality these objects are his mistress. Similarly there is another character who actually creates a masturbation machine. Which he uses for copulation with a t.v. anchor woman with whom he is in love with. There is another character who uses an object which she creates and it is created through rags and materials that are actually sewn together and its supposed to substitute for a lover. She actually creates a twin of this person to whom she is so attracted. In the end she creates a sado-masochistic relationship with this figurine that she is unable to have with the actual person that she's attracted to. In her imagination this figurine that is sewn together comes to life with the assistance of animation. That way it substitutes for the person.

W.H: Could you tell me more about the Czech surrealist society and how you're work adheres to that?

J.S: I have been a member of the Czech surrealist group since 1970 along with my wife. But in fact the surrealist group was first founded in 1934. There are only two people from the second generation of the surrealist group who are now over 70. However there are quite a few young people. Which to me means that surrealism still has something to offer to a certain segment of the population. Even though historians already, a long time ago, put surrealism into art history. We now publish our own magazine since 1989. Before that we worked underground. (A combinative laugh and sigh) Surrealism has been for us quite an adventure.

--Wendy Hall



A Taste For Revenge

by Wendy Hall

The San Francisco International Film Festival did not only focus its animated attention on Jan Svankmajer this year. Its animation series, *Revenge of Saturday Morning*, featured shorts from known and emerging talent, two of which are featured here.

If you've seen either one of his shorts, it's easy to believe Anthony Hodgson has moonlighted as a scriptwriter. His ear is quite plainly as keen as his unique visual imagination. Especially in the case of the monologue, which carries his two films as much as his animation.

Hilary (from this year's Spike and Mike Fest) and *Combination Skin* (San Francisco Film Fest), feature two characters in a very similar pinch. Two adults, telling about events in rather uneventful lives, speak to the same impartial and distant audience - a silent, unresponsive child. In a mode that is typical of a lot of British comedy, the humor in Hodgson's films surfaces accidentally; from the details of ordinary life, as opposed to madcap humor which is derived from the outrageous, a style of comedy that is typically married with animation and which is totally absent from both films. Although his humor and his films are both cradled by a sense of despair, they are by no means stale or depressing but have, as a friend of mine put it, a sweetly melancholy effect.

Recently relocated to San Francisco from London, Hodgson has now been hired on a one and a half year project at PDI

(Pacific Data Images), an animation company in Palo Alto which is largely owned by Dreamworks. He is presently working on a full-length film, *Ants*, which stars the voice of Woody Allen. When I visited his apartment it was barren except for a mattress, a few unopened boxes and one of the few unpacked items - the puppets from

to a puppet is seeing it talk, watching it breathe, move and have character, when it is sitting on a mantle in a living room you instinctively expect it, like meeting a movie star, to be like it is in the film.

Combination Skin, his second film, was made shortly after he left The Royal College of Art. "I did a three month

sentence at the Museum of Moving Image where I would work in a glass wall tank. I started to think that people were looking at me all the time. Channel Four commissioned that and that's when I worked on *Combination Skin*." Taking place in a deserted reptile museum, a mother tries and fails miserably, to talk to her bored and uninterested son. As she grasps at things to talk about, rambling on about different stories, she ends up talking to herself. The first sentence "How's school?", and the last, "You want to get some ice cream?" seem to be the only thing the child hears. Hodgson said he tried to evoke in the film, "that gloomy Sunday afternoon feeling of having to be somewhere you don't want to be." The relationship, or rather the gap between children and adults is present in both works - both films seem to ask, "what is it that

adults want from children?" Having the same mute child in both films seemed like such a particular and compelling choice, yet surprisingly it wasn't that deliberate of a decision. "I guess I was more familiar



Combination Skin © Anthony Hodgson

both of his films. As I approached where they were placed, I remember wanting to touch them but only gently. Not because I was going to break them but in fear that they might talk back. If your first exposure



Birdhouse © Richard C. Zimmerman

with adult and children relationships because of my parents than relationships between adults."

Unlike *Combination Skin*, *Hilary* shifts locales in an almost surreal succession of backgrounds, from the child's bedroom, an attic, a cathedral, a marionette stage, an idling automobile to Mars. Like a bedtime story, the film begins in the boy's room and as the story unfolds, he is carried through these backgrounds that are only distantly related to the first person narrative. "For *Hilary* there were loads of things going on. I remember I wanted to write a storybook story but I didn't want to illustrate it literally. " The story concerns Hilary, the objects and frustrations that make up her life, like her relationship with her mechanical mouse whom she bought because she really just wanted to live in a place without any people at all if she could, a place like Mars. Upon getting married to a piano player (the narrator?), she persuades her husband to add rooms to her house to combat her boredom - yet it didn't matter because she herself was boring anyway. As the story closes, the boy is being tucked in bed, ready for unconsciousness, leaving the audience to question whether

or not he was there the whole time. Neither of his films illustrate the narrative literally, in that Hodgson's animation and writing talent work simultaneously and together"-creating two separate stories that fuse perfectly at the same time.

Where Anthony Hodgson's shorts relied amply on dialogue, Richard Zimmerman's *Birdhouse* does not peep a word. An animator for *Pee Wee's Playhouse*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *James and The Giant Peach*, Richard Zimmerman made the eight minute film by himself in roughly two years. A hysterical piece that is constructed upon one simple idea, the film has, according to Zimmerman, been interpreted in numerous ways. "People have told me that it's about everything from not paying attention to your child to not being responsible for a pet."

Birdhouse, a clay-mation short (that Zimmerman deliberately and half mockingly designed to resemble computer animation) concerns Pablo, who while trying to construct a birdhouse, receives a knock on his door to find a box containing an amorphous blob, eager and in need of a home. When he takes in his new friend, they are an inseparable pair and it's a

match made in heaven. Yet as soon as Pablo has to go back to work on the birdhouse, the love affair plummets. Whimpering for the attention he quickly became accustomed to, the blob quickly and quite seriously, feels rejected. When he tries to revive his friend, he finds that it is to no avail - Hell hath no fury like a blob scorned. The thing's intense devotion morphs into a menacing fury, sprouting wings and a full set of fangs, who won't leave Pablo alone until he swallows him whole with his all consuming jaws. After being ingested, Pablo lands inside a crate which shuts on top of him,

finally condemned by the blob's relentless consumption.

What leaves this film open to so many variations of interpretation is due partly to the unspecified identity of the thing in the box. Yet one of it's many brilliant twists is that the question of "what is the blob" is irrelevant to the audience. What is compelling what he represents, not what he is. By making it a thing, the film lets its viewers concentrate on the relationship, which in its struggles with dependence and power is universal to just about any relationship; part of the reason both of the animators make their clay and rubber so recognizably human.

--Wendy Hall



Wendy Hall is a San Francisco-based writer appearing in ANiMATO! for the first time with two intriguing articles.

ANIMATION PRESERVATION

The Lost World

by Jere Guldin

Prior to this summer's arrival of the Steven Spielberg-Michael Crichton *Jurassic Park* sequel, *The Lost World* was known mainly as a 1912 book by the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and several film adaptations by the same name. The Doyle story introduced the character of Professor Challenger, who appeared in two additional novels and an equal number of short stories, none of which centered around dinosaurs, as did the first. Challenger appeared also in the various film versions of *The Lost World*, in blustery portrayals by Wallace Beery, Claude Rains and John Rhys-Davies.

The successive motion picture adaptations of the story adhered less and less closely to Doyle's original, however. The special effects techniques employed by each picture to bring its dinosaurs to filmic life varied greatly, as well. The 1960 *Lost World* used live lizards made to look giant-size, like its immediate predecessor at the same studio, *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1959). Puppetry and similar illusions were utilized for the paltry prehistoric denizens glimpsed in the 1993 remake and its sequel, *Return to the Lost World* (1994). Computer-generated imagery is primarily responsible for the dinosaurs of Spielberg's *Lost World*. But only

four years ago, the majority of the dinosaur sequences in *Jurassic Park* were accomplished through stop-motion animation enhanced by computer effects. Stop-motion

was the technique employed to bring the first *Lost World* to the screen, too.

Willis O'Brien was the effects technician for that 1925 feature. Although



The **Biggest Show on Earth**

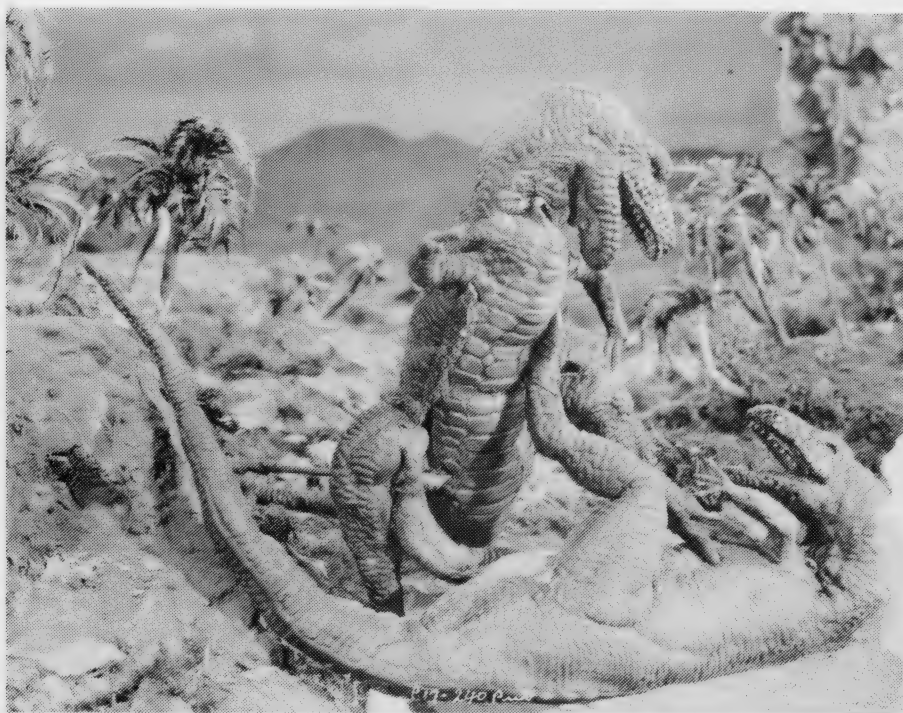
The **LOST WORLD**
is amazing Six Continents

No other picture has scored so startlingly.
No other picture has played so many long runs.
No other has won such a unanimous box-office verdict:
"Business Tremendous!"
And it's still going strong!

by SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
presented by arrangement with
WATTERSON R. ROTHACKER
with
BESSIE LOVE, LEWIS STONE
WALLACE BEERY, LLOYD HUGHES

Research and Technical Director, WILLIS O'BRIEN
under supervision of EARL HUGHSON

Promotional sheet from 1925



O'Brien was not the screen's first stop-motion animator, certainly he was its premiere practitioner from the 1920s through 1940s. Follow-up O'Brien credits included *King Kong* and its sequel, *Son of Kong* (both 1933); *Mighty Joe Young* (1949), for which he received an Academy Award; and lesser-known endeavors such as *The Black Scorpion* (1957). He was even hired as technical advisor for the big-lizard remake of *The Lost World*, but was disap-

pointed by the production decision not to use stop-motion to simulate live dinosaurs.

O'Brien's career dates from the 'teens, when he animated novelty short subjects for release through the Edison Company. Representative titles that survive today include *The Dinosaur and the Missing Link* and *Prehistoric Poultry*. Unfortunately, virtually half of O'Brien's output from this time no longer exists, such as *Curious Pets of Our Ancestors* and Mickey's

Naughty Nightmares. Although most of the Edison pictures incorporated dinosaurs into their one-reel length, these were played mainly for humorous effect. O'Brien's first non-comic work was *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain* (1919). A follow-up film, *Along the Moonbeam Trail* (1920), made without O'Brien's participation but believed to employ outtakes or excised footage from *Slumber Mountain*, today numbers among the missing.

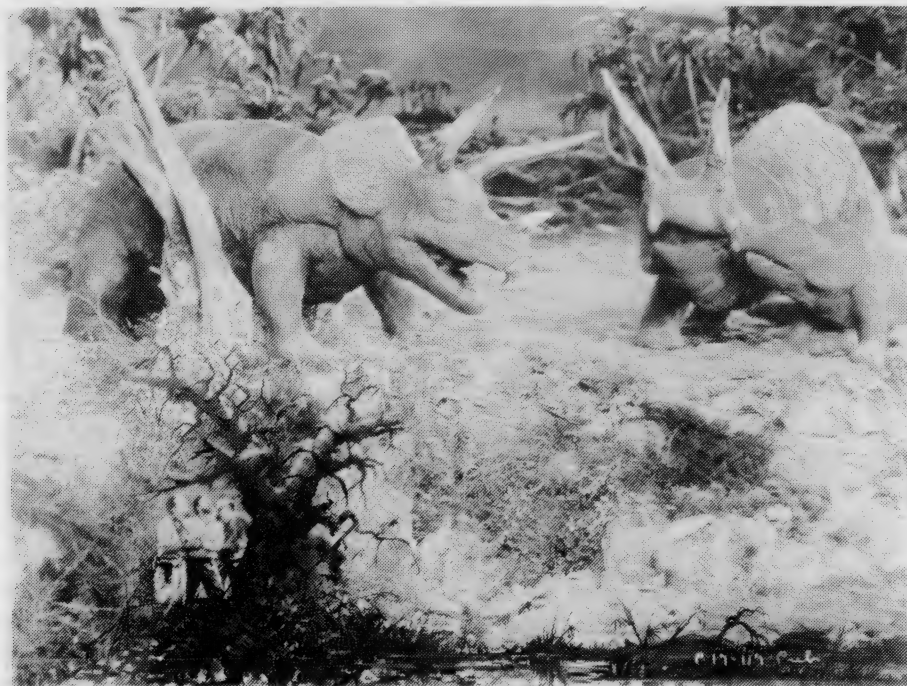
For all his achievements, much of O'Brien's career is, unfortunately, a series of unrealized projects and unfulfilled ambitions. Pictures such as *Atlantis* and *Gwangi* went into pre-production and then were abandoned. Extensive special effects test footage was shot for *Creation* and *War Eagles*; only part of the tests for *Creation* survive today.

For decades, even *King Kong* was shorn of its complete length, bereft of several minutes of action deemed too grisly or risque for reissue following the enforcement of the Production Code in 1934. This footage was restored to *Kong* in more recent times, although the pictorial quality of the excised sections is inferior to that of the remainder of the feature. Still missing—and likely to remain so—are scenes removed prior to the original release, including the famed "spider pit" sequence.

The biggest missing piece in all O'Brien's work, however, has been *The Lost World*, itself. Although readily available for decades via film rental, television screenings, and now on video, the feature can be seen only in a truncated version of half its original length. The complete, ten-reel *Lost World* has not been shown in this country since its original release.

Even this abbreviated version might not have survived, except that it was marketed for home movie rentals back in the 1920s. A nitrate dupe negative used for generating 16mm reduction prints was made at that time, and three of those five reels remained intact through the years. These reels were preserved at the George Eastman House film archive, with the rest optically enlarged from a vintage 16mm print, resulting in the version of the film released on laser disc and video not long ago.

Most persons viewing *The Lost World* today aren't aware of the missing



All *Lost World* stills and material from the collection of Jere Guldin

sections, and assume mistakenly that its gaps in continuity are due to the silent cinema's inability to tell a coherent story. Much of what is gone is plot, although a good bit of O'Brien's dinosaur animation has been removed, as well. Extra bits and pieces of the feature have surfaced over the last decade or so (a reel of dinosaur animation test footage has even turned up!), but not in sufficient quantity to bridge the many narrative gaps.

That might finally be rectified. Just recently, a longer—although still incomplete—version of the film was discovered at the Czech film archive, and a copy of this material was acquired by the George Eastman House. Presumably, the quality of sections enlarged from 16mm will be upgraded by this footage. More important is that *The Lost World* will be returned to 80% or better of its original length once restoration is completed, a marked improvement from the 50% currently available. That's welcome news indeed for all stop-motion and silent film fans, and will help reclaim some of what has been lost of Willis O'Brien's motion picture legacy.

For more information about animated film preservation, write ASIFA-Hollywood, Animation Preservation Project, 725 South Victory Boulevard, Burbank, California 91502. You can read more about the making of *The Lost World*—and what has been removed from it—in Scott MacQueen's informative article, *The Lost World: Merely Misplaced?*, in *American Cinematographer*, (June 1992). Also by Scott MacQueen: *Cinematic Archaeology* in *Cinefex* #55 (August 1993). Scott MacQueen (Again!) in *Cinefex* #70 with *The Lost World-Found!* (June 1997). The shooting script to the film can be found in the book, *The Lost World of Willis O'Brien*, edited by Roy Kinnard (McFarland & Company, Inc., 1993). Also in print: *Willis O'Brien Special Effects Genius* by Steve Archer (McFarland & Company, Inc., 1993) --Jere Guldin



Jere Guldin is a regular contributor to this magazine through his excellent and popular column on film preservation. Recently married, Jere can usually be found at ASIFA functions in Hollywood or in the Film Preservation Department of the UCLA archives.

Some of the Scenes That Made Boston Gasp



STILLS cannot tell the tale on this picture—because there is something about actually getting the effect of REALITY to the thrills and gasps that a motionless photograph fails to bring. But the screen does it—Oh, boy!

Big Moments in One of the Year's Big Pictures

A page from Motion Picture World (1925)



56 ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S "THE LOST WORLD" A FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE



The original ink and charcoal version of Joe Harris' cover art.

UNDERDOG

THE CANINE CRUSADER

BY DAVID KRELL



Familiar themes abounded in 1960s animation.

Hanna-Barbera ruled with cartoon depictions of famous favorites, e.g., Fred Flintstone/Ralph Kramden, Yogi Bear/Ed Norton, Top Cat/Sergeant Bilko, Huckleberry Hound/Tennessee Ernie Ford, Doggie Daddy/Jimmy Durante.

Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse parodied the elements of and shared several similarities with Batman and Robin, not surprising as both crimefighting teams enjoyed the same creator, Bob Kane.

Rocky and Bullwinkle battled Boris and Natasha, the personification of the Evil Empire during the dark days of the Cold War.

Also familiar in the era — a superhero parody who recalled a certain alien of the planet Krypton, one who spoke in rhyme, possessed a bespectacled, mild-mannered alter ego and obtained super energy from a pill. Well, this was the 60s!

Two years before Super Saturday, a canine superhero captured notice with his adventures. *Underdog* (First Aired: NBC, October 3, 1964) featured the title character (voiced by Wally Cox) with the alternate job-descriptive name of Shoeshine Boy constantly fetching his romantic interest, television reporter Sweet Polly Purebred (voiced by Norma McMillan), from a peril à la Superman and Lois Lane.

Even the show's opening mimicked that of the Superman stories.

"Look! In the sky!"

"It's a plane!" (Person #1)

"It's a bird!" (Person #2)

"It's a frog!" (Person #3)

"A frog?" (Person #4)

Of course, the canine crusader answered the mystery, stating, "Not plane or bird or even frog! It's just li'l ol me! Underdog!"

In an inside joke, the creators placed a not-so-slight reference to the show's production company by giving Polly's station the initials TTV, short for Total Television.

Viewers knew Underdog had the situation well in hand when he declared his mission with phrases like "When Polly's in

trouble, I am not slow! It's hip, hip, hip and away I go!" or "There's no need to fear! Underdog is here!"

To thoroughly discuss the genesis of *Underdog*, though, one needs to examine other segments within the show.

The Beginning

Before creating *Underdog*, Leonardo Television/Total Television assembled a hodgepodge of characters in the series *King Leonardo and His Short Subjects* (First Aired: NBC, October 15, 1960). Joe Harris enjoys a unique position as one of the creators and significant behind-the-scenes forces in Leonardo/TT.

In an interview for this article, Mr. Harris provided the back story of *King Leonardo*, beginning with some of the major players.

"Gordon Johnson was the Senior Account Executive for General Mills at Dancer, Fitzgerald, Sample, Inc. W. Watts Biggers (nicknamed "Buck") was an Account Executive for the cereal brands. Chester A. Stover was Copy Supervisor, also working in cereal brands. I was Vice-President, Supervisor of Animation for General Mills.

"At that time, there was a very strict delineation among writers, art directors and producers. I actually wore three hats, working in all fields.

"General Mills informed Johnson of its desire to develop a show for children's television, then relatively unexploited.



Daily Double-Looking For Trouble!

All graphics™ & © GBPC



King Leonardo

Buck suggested the three of us actually create a show. We came up with the idea of *King Leonardo and His Short Subjects* and they bought it."

Hal Erickson also details the series' beginnings in his authoritative and comprehensive tome *Television Cartoon Shows: An Illustrated Encyclopedia, 1949 through 1993*.

"Created at the behest of NBC and General Mills to fill a Saturday morning gap vacated by Hanna-Barbera's *Ruff and Reddy* [First Aired: NBC, September 14, 1957], *King Leonardo* followed the Hanna-Barbera format of one main character sharing half hour space with two component cartoons."

King Leonardo ruled over Bongo Congo with his trusty skunk aide-de-camp, Odie Colognie. King and Odie constantly battled antagonist Biggy Rat, a nefarious character who teamed up with Itchy Brother, a fraternal connection of King Leonardo. Jackson Beck voiced King Leonardo and Biggy Rat while Allen Swift voiced Odie Colognie and Itchy Brother.

Biggy Rat recalled Edward G. Robinson in voice and intonations. Interestingly, another animation offering of 1960 also provided a character with similar qualities.

As a caricature of the film star,

Flat-Face Frog tried to foil the title characters of *Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse* (First Aired: Syndicated, 1960) for domination of Empire City.

King Leonardo promptly devoured the competition in the cartoon jungle. In a letter dated November 29, 1960 addressed to C.W. Plattes of General Mills, Gordon Johnson details the instant rise to success.

"The King Leonardo show after only three national ratings is the top rated children's program on daytime network television. As you know, the initial rating produced a 40% share of audience and we were very excited about this performance. The second and third ratings exceeded 50% in share which makes it by far the best performing new show of any type on television this year."

Fans may remember *King Leonardo* under its syndication title, *King and Odie*. Segments of *King Leonardo* included *The Hunter* and *Tooter Turtle*. Erickson provides the connection between the former and a famous old-time radio character.

"Total TV executive Treadwell Covington created *The Hunter* especially for actor Kenny Delmar, who revived the Senator Claghorn's Southern bombast with which he'd risen to fame in the 1940s on NBC radio's *Fred Allen Show*."

However, to be thorough, one must note the original animation incarnation of Senator Claghorn, the similarly named Foghorn Leghorn of Warner Brothers' Looney Tunes/Merrie Melodies stable.

For those keeping score, Foghorn Leghorn debuted in *Walky Talky Hawky* (Released: August 31, 1946), an Academy



Chumley and Tennessee Tuxedo

Award Nominee.

As a canine detective, *The Hunter* (voiced by Kenny Delmar) trailed *The Fox* (voiced by Ben Stone), his criminal nemesis. Good old-fashioned track-the-bad-guy-down, crime-doesn't-pay theme.

Children identified with the uncertainty and fickleness of *Tooter Turtle* (voiced by Allen Swift), a character who never quite seemed to find his niche, yet always displayed a dignity and willingness to try new things.

Inevitably, *Tooter* sought the advice and assistance of *Wizard the Lizard* (voiced by Frank Milano), a magician, on his adventures.

Erickson points out another component to *King Leonardo*, often overlooked, reinforcing the connection between the advertising world and the creative arena. These areas have co-existed in relative co-dependent necessity since the days of old-time radio.

"As with all General Mills-sponsored cartoon series of the 1960-1963 era, *King Leonardo* contained an additional component that hasn't been seen in years: the adventures of *Twinkles the Elephant*, produced by Leonardo TV and narrated by George S. Irving. The 'Twinkles' cartoons were meant as tie-ins to a General Mills breakfast cereal which included as a sales incentive a complete, two-page 'Twinkles' comic book story glued to the back of each box."

An Oasis of Quality in a Vast Wasteland

An entertaining and educational cartoon resulted from the call upon broadcasters to offer more programming for the public good, a consequence of the TV quiz show scandal of the 1950s and the now famous description of television product as a vast wasteland.

Tennessee Tuxedo and His Tales (First Aired: CBS, September 28, 1963) featured the curious and scheming penguin named Tennessee Tuxedo (voiced by Don Adams) with his sidekick, the dim-witted yet willing Chumley (voiced by Bradley Bolke), a walrus.

Stanley Livingston ran Megapolis Zoo, home to the pair who inevitably hatched an idea which needed professional, scientific guidance. Enter Phineas J. Whoopee (voiced by Larry Storch), also



Savoir Faire

Ruffled Feather & Running Board
The Go Go Gophers

Tooter Turtle

Wizard the Lizard

Klondike Kat

Odie Cologne

known as 'the man with all the answers.'

Mr. Whoopee provided quick studies on various scientific matters with basic, informative visual diagrams and explanations.

Despite the lesson, Tennessee Tuxedo and Chumley never quite accomplished their goal, forgetting or omitting an important part of the operation.

Harris explains the effective strategy of the educational discourse.

"We were not giving didactic techniques to children. There was a very conscious decision not to preach to children, but to give them surrogates. As we taught Tennessee Tuxedo and Chumley, we taught the child. Then, he or she wants to see how that knowledge can be applied."

By way of example, take the epi-

sode entitled *The Rain Makers* where Tennessee Tuxedo and Chumley set out to prove they're as smart as human beings, applying for jobs as weathermen dressed in traditional weather garb—raincoats! After getting the jobs, a dissatisfied farmer complains about the lack of rain with shotgun in hand. A misguided Chumley follows the Indian custom of beating drums and dancing to create rain. Upon further reflection, the two agree to see Phineas J. Whoopee. At this point in the story, the children are likely interested in and compelled by the problem, i.e., "How do you make it rain?"

Using his one-of-a-kind three-dimensional blackboard ('3DBB'), Whoopee thoroughly and succinctly explains the rain process and the theory of dropping dry ice in clouds from an airplane to create rain.

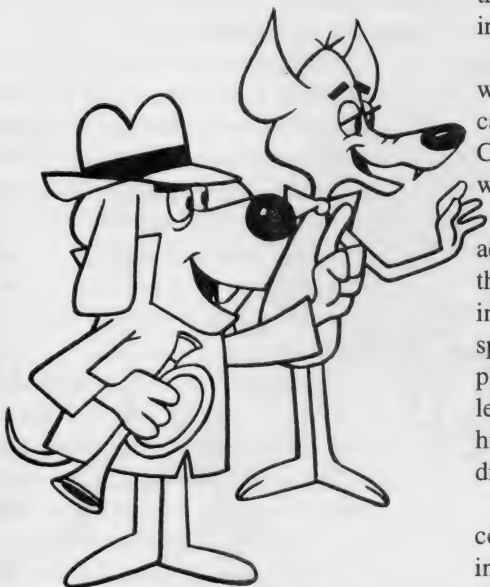
George W. Woolery points out the significant timing of *Tennessee Tuxedo* in *Children's Television: The First 35 Years*.

"*Tennessee Tuxedo and His Tales* was one of the first humorous educational cartoons introduced in the wake of FCC Chairman Newton R. Minow's 1961 'vast wasteland' speech."

Minow delivered his infamous address to the 39th Annual Convention of the National Association of Broadcasters in Washington, D.C. on May 9, 1961. In the speech, Minow specifically addresses the plight of children's programming, challenging television executives to provide higher quality programming for the children viewership.

"If parents, teachers and ministers conducted their responsibilities by following the ratings, children would have a steady diet of ice cream, school holidays and no

Sunday School. What about your responsibilities? Is there no room on television to teach, to inform, to uplift, to stretch, to enlarge the capacities of our children? Is there no room for programs deepening their understanding of children in other lands? Is there no room for a children's news show explaining something about the world to them at their level of understanding? Is there no room for reading the great literature of the past, teaching them the great traditions of freedom? There are some fine children's shows, but they are drowned out in the massive doses of cartoons, violence and more violence. Must these be your trademarks? Search your consciences and see if you cannot offer more to your young beneficiaries, whose future you guide so many hours each and every day."



The Hunter and The Fox



Phineas J. Whoopee



Sweet Polly Purebred and Our Hero

An interesting segment of *Tennessee Tuxedo* came in the form of a tall tale-spinning, distinguished gentleman.

In *The World of Commander McBragg*, the title character (voiced by Kenny Delmar) told of previous adventures, reminiscent of one Jonathan Quayle Higgins, foil and comic relief to Hawaii's favorite private investigator, Thomas Sullivan Magnum, in *Magnum, P.I.* (First Aired: CBS, December 11, 1980).

Actually, Erickson theorizes McBragg's beginnings occurred a quarter-century prior to the segments' first airings.

"The central character, a longwinded Baron Munchausen type named Commander McBragg, wasn't new when his ancestor appeared in the...Warner Bros. cartoon *The Major Lied Till Dawn*."

Harris dispels this theory, explaining that C. Aubrey Smith of the movie *Four Feathers* provided the inspiration for McBragg. In addition, Erickson stated that the artists drew McBragg "as a caricature of British character actor C. Aubrey Smith."

Another segment of *Tennessee Tuxedo* paired a long-horned steer with an American Eagle — *Yap and Baldy*.

There's No Need to Fear, Underdog Is Here!

And then there was Underdog. This unlikely champion appealed to the children audiences, not because of what he was, but perhaps because of what he was not. Harris gives some insight, noting that heroes without flaws do not engross the audience.

"Heroes are generally uninteresting. Underdog is really almost an anti-hero. He's not super-proficient. We all know Underdog will get the villain, but he bumbles and stumbles along the way. That makes him interesting to children. Also, he only speaks in rhyme. That makes him different from other superhero characters. In addition, he has vulnerabilities which makes him less certain of achieving his goal which is to capture Riff Raff or Simon Barsinister."

Only one year after Underdog's debut, the canine champion made his first of many appearances in the most visible holiday event of all time — Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. A shrewd bit of marketing boosted the importance of Underdog's inaugural parade float.

NBC aired the parade from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on November 25, 1965, Thanksgiving Day. A thirty-minute *Underdog* show entitled *No Thanksgiving* aired immediately following the parade from



Commander McBragg

12:00 pm to 12:30 pm.

An NBC press release dated October 28, 1965 summarizes the action.

"The storyline concerns the efforts of Simon Barsinister [sic], the mad scientist, to stop a Thanksgiving Day parade and thereby capture an entire city. His method is to use a 'time machine' to return in history to the day before the first Thanksgiving, stirring up enough bad feelings between the Pilgrims and Indians so that nobody has anything to be thankful for.

"But Underdog thwarts those evil plans by his usual ingenuity, skill, finesse, and clean-living sneakiness. Of course, his super powers come in handy, too."

When *Underdog* moved to CBS in 1966, becoming part of Super Saturday, two new segments appeared. *Go Go Gophers* gave a cowboys-and-Indians premise, with the heroes belonging to the latter.

Inept military coyotes constantly conflicted and contended with the gophers, Ruffled Feathers and Running Board, yet they could never quite exercise their military authority in a winning fashion as the gophers outwitted them at every turn.

In the cat-and-mouse themed *Klondike Kat*, more than a debt of gratitude to Tom and Jerry appears in order. Savoir Faire, a French Canadian mouse of the criminal persuasion, frustrated and flustered the feline Mountie at every opportunity.

However, viewers knew the outcome by, if nothing else, Klondike Kat's exclamatory catch phrases: "I'll make MINCEMEAT out of that mouse!" and "Klondike Kat always get his mouse!"

Children of the 60s, now parents of the 90s, fondly remember the Underdog characters, some of whom recall persons of fame. Besides the aforementioned and apparent Superman connection in *Underdog*, Simon Barsinister easily resembles Lionel Barrymore as a super-evil, ultravillainous version of Potter from *It's A Wonderful Life* (1946).

Sheldon Leonard also appeared in *It's A Wonderful Life* as a good-natured bartender, but mannerisms of his criminal characters from other 1940s B-movies evidences in Riff Raff, Underdog's other arch-enemy.

In addition, Colonel Kit Coyote battled his nemeses in *Go Go Gophers*

to no avail, despite the inspiration for his character apparently being the tough and bullish Teddy Roosevelt.

Using a play on words in naming characters also proved effective with the Underdog family. Hanna-Barbera used this approach heavily in *The Flintstones* (First Aired: ABC, September 30, 1960), especially with celebrity parodies, e.g., Ed Sullivan - Ed Sullystone, Tuesday Weld - Tuesday Wednesday.

Cleverly and aptly named, Savoir Faire's moniker bases on the French phrase which literally means 'knowing what to do.' Riff Raff's name pretty much explains his character — common, in this case, a common hood. Same name game with Simon Barsinister.

Indeed, the franchise enjoys a name which defines his character. An underdog can be defined as one whom nobody expects to win because of circumstances and nature. Notwithstanding the odds, the audience roots for the underdog. Such is the case with the canine crusader.

Also, as with any animation, matching the right voice to a character can be a make or break situation. Who else but Wally Cox could have voiced Underdog? Cox had portrayed a dignified timidity a decade prior in the title role on the sitcom *Mr. Peepers* (First Aired: NBC, July 3, 1952).

Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh defined the Peepers character, seemingly a prequel to Underdog, in *The Complete Directory To Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows: 1946-Present* (6th Edition, 1995).



Simon Barsinister

"The central character was Robinson Peepers, a shy, quiet, slow-moving science teacher whose efforts to do the right thing always seemed to backfire."

Further, witness Don Adams' dead-on verbalization of Tennessee Tuxedo, a character with qualities and voice intonations strongly resembling that of Adams' best-known character, Maxwell Smart, a.k.a. Agent 86, on *Get Smart* (First Aired: NBC, September 18, 1965).

Both characters possess traits of over-confidence and maladroitness in addition to a stalwart desire to accomplish the task at hand.

New vs. Old

Recently, Golden Books purchased the rights to Underdog, et.al. Reformatting efforts have begun insofar as cleaning up the video elements in efforts to offer the Underdog universe to yet another generation of viewers with restored and vivid colors.

Jon Gartenberg, Golden Books' Director of Distribution Services, supervised the upgrading of Underdog shows, sixty-five (65) reformatted half-hour installments featuring all characters as of the writing of this article (May 1997).

A respect for the genesis and history of the characters and the original formats of the episodes helps to maintain and utilize the creators' original visions in compiling new versions.

Basically, the research encompassed the original production, distribution and structure of the episodes in their various network and syndicated lives. Gartenberg explains.

"Our goal was to create vastly improved video masters. We went back to the original film elements. The interpositives contained the best overall picture quality. From these film elements, we created high quality digital video telecine transfers."

"Our approach was systematic. By researching and understanding how the shows were originally produced and distributed, we could more easily reconstruct the reformat. We sorted the product by storyline and researched how the episodes were originally formatted for distribution."

"The steps involved in video and audio restoration are complicated and com-

plex. It is a labor-intensive process, but it produces a better quality product."

A caveat may be in order here. Although the reformatting restores the visual elements to a vivid quality, a new, jazzy theme introducing all the Underdog characters has curiously replaced the original, simpler Underdog theme.

Like the saying goes, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Even today, some thirty years after the show's first appearance, fans can instantly sing the *Underdog* theme. No less a celebrity than Tom Hanks did so on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*.

Attempts to update elements may prove ineffective and backfire. For every success like the recent Batman films and corresponding bat-bonanza of merchandising, there are dozens of failures and therein lies the risk of tampering with something that works.

Popular culture icons and elements like Underdog and the accompanying theme have been embedded in the public's hearts and minds. People take a certain comfort in knowing that their favorites remain intact, realizing the dictum that some things never change.

Then again, the best things never do. Or at least they shouldn't.



Sweet Polly Purebred in a Fetching Ensemble



Shoeshine Boy

Coda

For audiences who remember *Underdog* segments as part of *Rocky and His Friends* (First Aired: ABC, September 29, 1959), a quick note may clear up any confusion.

In the wonderful world of syndication repackaging, General Mills used its sponsor position to influence the cross-programming of product.

Another factor has caused the mistaking of *Underdog* and *Rocky* having the same producers. Erickson addresses this important point, noting the visual similarity between the two offerings and the simple reason for the perception.

"[T]he fact that [Rocky producer Jay] Ward and Leonardo/Total used the same Mexico-based Gamma Studios facilities gave the two companies' series a superficial resemblance to one another (at one point, in fact, the playful Gamma folks stuck Bullwinkle into a Go Go Gophers adventure.) This in turn has led many viewers to believe that the Ward and Leonardo/Total series were made by the same producers."

In the July 12, 1996 issue of *Entertainment Weekly*, Kristen Baldwin reviewed the two shows for their debut on The Cartoon Network, giving *Rocky* more credit for its witty dialogue and political puns, comparing *Underdog* as facile with its own satiric qualities.

"For the less literary minded, *Underdog*, with its humble Shoeshine Boy who speaks in rhymes, has a mass-produced look that gives more edge to the cartoon's parody of glossy superheroes. By the by, if Natasha and Sweet Polly Purebred got in a catfight, who would win?"

Although *Rocky* undoubtedly gets acclaim for its clever allusions to the international political situation of the era, *Underdog* did not suffer from lack of quips.

In the four-part episode entitled *The Vacuum Gun*, believed to be the last *Underdog* episode produced, Simon Barsinister gathers Riff Raff and other members of the underground to defeat Underdog.

Reference is made to the third (!) sinking of the ship christened Lusitanic, an apparent allusion to the Titanic and Lusitania disasters. This example from *Underdog* reinforces a thesis provided by noted television critic David Bianculli in his book *Teleliteracy* (1992).

"I suggest that cultural literacy, while a fine idea, is applying its energies in the wrong direction. If you want to talk about knowledge that is shared by everyone, the area on which to focus is television. Television is our most common language, our most popular pastime, our basic point of reference; it's also where most of our children are first exposed to allusion, satire, and other 'literary' concepts."

In addition to the *Rocky* producer confusion, fans may not remember some supporting stories in *Underdog* mentioned in this article. The reasoning is simple.

When repackaging *Underdog* for syndication and its second network run on CBS, the powers that be mixed and matched elements, thereby altering the show from its original appearance on NBC.

--David Krell

Jonathan Rosenthal, a researcher at the Museum of Television & Radio, provided David Krell with rare and outstanding material for this article.

David Krell is an Associate Producer at Fox News Channel. David is also a former attorney with varied experiences in the entertainment industry. David started his legal career at Broadway Video (Saturday Night Live) where one of his areas of responsibility was the field of copyright and trademark infringements, the very bane of existence for intellectual property rights owners.

BV owned the rights to a majority of pre-1972 Rankin-Bass product (now controlled by Golden Books), allowing David to cultivate and enhance his interest in animation. A stint in the Research Department at Worldvision/Spelling followed.

David's articles have appeared in publications such as *Television Chronicles*, *Toy Shop*, *Collector's Showcase*, *Outré* and *Model and Toy Collector*. David's previous articles for ANiMATO! include *Sixties Spy Craze: Animation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery* for Issue #34 and *Felix Gets Another Life* for Issue #36.

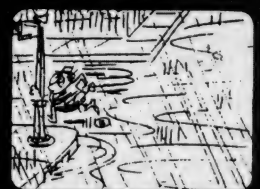
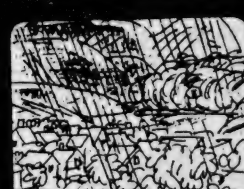
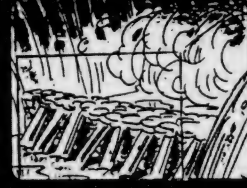
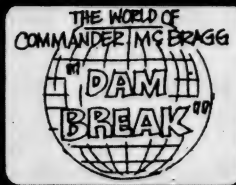
Working on the *Underdog* cover story for Issue #38 has been a labor of love for David who first discovered *Underdog* et al on sleepy 70s Sunday mornings. New York's WNEW (now WNYW) Channel 5 aired the show before another favorite offering, the local children's TV program *Wonderama*.

We look forward to more articles from David in future issues of ANiMATO!



The dapper and dangerous Riff Raff
(All characters TM & © GBPC)

From the collection of
 Pete Fitzgerald:
 A complete storyboard from
The World of Commander McBragg
 drawn by Joe Harris



LIFE WITH UNDERDOG



BY JOSEPH HARRIS



In 1969 The Kingdom of Zot closed its gates, Simon Barsinister shut down his laboratory, Riff Raff puffed his last El Odoro and Sweet Polly Purebred broadcast her final news release. General Mills had terminated production of new episodes of Underdog, bringing to a close a turbulent, exciting and altogether extraordinary decade in my life.

The characters I had created, Underdog and his siblings, King Leonardo, Tennessee Tuxedo, Go Go Gophers, The Hunter, Tooter Turtle, Klondike Kat and Commander McBragg had enjoyed huge success. They'd won top daytime honors on both NBC and CBS. They were soon to surface in syndication in almost every corner of the planet with a wall plug and a television set. For ten years, half hour episodes had rolled off the studio line, begotten from hundreds of scripts and thousands of drawings. Thanks to those programs, millions of parents across the country got to savor an extra 30 minutes of sleep on weekend mornings while their offspring (General Mills hoped) were munching Cheerios in front of the tube. Since then I've heard the 60s referred to as the Golden Age of Children's Television. It was not a term those of us down in the mines digging out the nuggets would have used at the time, but it does cast a nice retro glow on a memorable era.

Of all the characters created in all of the shows, Underdog seemed to strike the strongest chord in the hearts and imaginations of the kids. They got a big kick out of mimicking his "There's no need to fear, Underdog is here!" line. The Underdog

balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade seemed for a while to rival pilgrims and turkeys as a symbol for the holiday and sparked a generation of kids trick-or-treating dressed in red suits and blue capes. The balloon appeared on the front of TV Guide and even grazed the stratosphere of chic in '66 by making the cover of the November *New Yorker* magazine. A visiting Brit photographer celebrated Underdog in a pictorial essay of things he found quintessentially American, describing him as a whimsical icon of the national spirit. Whatever combination of luck, timing or alignment of the planets was involved, Underdog came to win a cherished spot in the pantheon of animation heroes.



Everyone's favorite rhyming hero.
He's rough and tough.
He takes no guff!

But in 1969, I figured my life with Underdog was over. I felt a little like I was saying goodbye to a favorite buddy at the end of the war. Being fairly sure we wouldn't be seeing each other again, I went on to other things. But Underdog kept turning up.

All of this had its improbable start in 1959, when three of us who worked together in the same advertising agency in New York, were asked to develop a proposal for a children's television series for General Mills. Ours would be one among several under consideration. Although I'd been writing and producing animated commercials for a while, I didn't know much about creating a series. That didn't seem such a big handicap because there were only a handful of cartoons on the air. Kidtime was in its infancy. It was all so new that one of the decisions that seems amusing today was whether to produce the shows in color since most of the nation's televisions were still in black and white. Luckily, our sponsor opted for the cutting edge.

We were delighted with the opportunity and unfazed by the challenge and that was fortunate because the proposal was accepted. *King Leonardo and His Short Subjects* went into production in 1960 and our lives went into hyperspace. We suddenly were faced with the stunning imperative of turning out a complete new show every week for the foreseeable future. Robert Redford, in the movie, *The Candidate*, played a man who ran a protest campaign for a senatorial seat against a favored incumbent and won a completely

unanticipated upset. His last line in the movie was, "What do I do now?" My sentiments exactly.

In a decision which seemed appropriate at the moment but grew to borderline lunacy as the months passed, we decided to stagger our departures from the agency to minimize harmful effects on the account. (In those antique days loyalty to one's employer was still in fashion.) This resulted in my remaining full time at the agency for over a year while concurrently handling full-time production of the program after hours.

Writing about it today, I wonder if I could have passed a saliva test back then. My schedule had me racing home from work in New York at 6:30, having a quick dinner with my wife and infant daughter, then disappearing immediately into the small extra bedroom we'd set up as a studio, where I developed characters and churned out storyboards until precisely 4:00 in the morning, caught three hours of sleep, then got back on the 7:30 train to be in the office by 9:00, and after work repeated the cycle until the weekend when I could put in the 30 or so requisite hours to complete the schedule. If you think that was a run-on sentence, you get the idea.

The first two months, which I later designated the Hallucinatory Period,



gave way gradually to a Zen-like state I dubbed The Zone. I found I was endowed with immense clarity and insight, but the borders between the organic and inorganic world would occasionally merge and I would find myself conducting conversations with vegetables and shiny objects. As the old metabolism struggled to adjust, however, this normalized and people began not to duck into doorways at my approach.

King Leonardo was followed by *Tennessee Tuxedo and His Tales*, the story of a know-it-all penguin with the voice of Don Adams, and his walrus sidekick, Chumley. By the time Tennessee was on the board, I was gone from the agency and had moved into a real house with a studio and 24 full hours at my disposal every day. After the first year and a half it felt like a vacation.

Tennessee was developed in response to a request for an entertainment program that was also educational. Many a ship had sunk on that reef. Tennessee was successful because he and Chumley were designed as surrogates for the child viewer rather than didactic presenters. Whenever they had a problem they went to their guru, Mr. Whoopee, who explained how to solve it using a magic slate. The child engaged in the story vicariously absorbed the "lesson"

because it was directed toward the characters, not the child, and understanding it was essential to enjoyment of the plot.

Underdog first saw the light of day, or more correctly the light of twin fluorescents in my desk lamp, in 1963. From the very first pencils he looked much as he does today, with the same baggy suit, oversized cape and perpetual Candide-like expression that only turned to righteous anger when confronted with "those who rob and plunder." I modeled Sweet Polly Purebred along the lines of Marilyn Monroe. Simon Barsinister was the graphic embodiment of Lionel Barrymore's voice. Riff Raff was modeled partly on George Raft, the Vaseline-haired movie baddy, and partly as a generic Mafia stereotype. Wonderful Wally Cox was the voice of Underdog and it was one of those Yes! moments to see how beautifully his personality and the Underdog character synched in production.

Underdog went on screen in October of 1964. Almost immediately he was a hit. The kids loved him. The network loved him. When Macy's asked for the balloon for the parade we knew we had a winner. No one had previously done a figure in the prone flying position so I designed him horizontally to differentiate him from the other characters, also figuring that it would take longer for him to pass a given spot than his upright rivals and give him more camera time on air.



We produced the animation at Gamma Studios, a newly-established production facility in Mexico City. Local regs limited American supervisors to 10% of total employees, which meant that three Yanqui animation experts had to execute with a relatively raw crew of animators, inkers, painters and camera people. Some of the animators were recruited directly from art school and trained on the job. Some of the other folks were hired off the street. One of my favorite idiosyncrasies of Mexican production was lack of a source for animation quality paint. They solved that problem by going out to the local market and buying regular house paint. Then they mixed it right in the studio and brushed it straight onto the cels. (I haven't a clue what voodoo went into Mexican paint preservatives but somebody should look into it because the colors on the cels I have still look like they were applied yesterday.) My sombrero is permanently off to the guys at Gamma; they did a terrific job.

Meanwhile, back at Rancho Americano, every week eighteen minutes of new animation were being hammered out for each show. Each half hour was divided into four equal segments. Each segment required an average of 160 storyboard panels, or between 640 to 650 panels per week. To maintain style, the backgrounds on the storyboards were thoroughly developed for the Mexican renderers to follow. The characters' actions were spelled out in detail for the animators, with pose changes and numerous in-betweens indicated on each panel. Every other day one of three local animation directors would meet with me to go over the bar sheets to keep the flow to Mexico going. Amazingly, throughout ten years we never missed a deadline.

That we ever managed to come up with even a foot of film convinces me that there truly is a patron saint of fools and animators.

I've pondered Underdog's appeal for years. I think some of it had to do with the changes that had come along at the time of his conception. The atmosphere of the solemn, gray 50s was dissipating like a cloud in the sunshine 60s. The culture was changing. People were rediscovering laughter. They were beginning to wear weird clothes and have fun. Even the kids were



becoming more hip. Satire thrives on a more evolved sense of humor so the notion of the comic antihero may just have found its time. We weren't aware then that our audience of children were the forerunners of the greatest marketing tsunami in American history - the Baby Boomers. Maybe we just caught the wave right.

Underdog left the Boomers with an indelible nostalgia. I can't count the number of drawings I've done for "the kids" at the request of Boomer parents I know. A couple of years ago I was conferring with some folks in New York about a piece I'd written and we got on a conference call to their attorney in Los Angeles, a lawyer straight out of central casting - the voice, the attitude. Probably a \$3000 Armani suit, hand-sewn Italian shoes perched up on a 12 foot desk made from a single piece of rare wood - your upscale Boomer take on Perry Mason. Our conversation wasn't moving too well until one of the New York folks mentioned my relationship to Underdog. There was silence on the line. Then after a moment a reedy, nine year-old tenor floated out of our speakerphone singing, "...speed of lightning, roar of thunder..." It was learned counsel regressing happily to his childhood roots.

Boomers. Ya gotta love 'em.

Underdog's influence on the millions of kids from the Baby Boom generation may have found its culminating ex-

pression on the Rosie O'Donnell show this past spring when Tom Hanks was her guest. The discussion turned to cartoons. Tom related how Underdog had been a favorite of his as a kid growing up and he then spontaneously rendered the Underdog theme word for word, followed by flawless deliveries of the themes from Tennessee and Go Go Gophers as an encore. I was so touched that I sent him a drawing and a letter of appreciation. He wrote back a thank you note that concluded, "America loves an Underdog." Hey, maybe that's the answer.

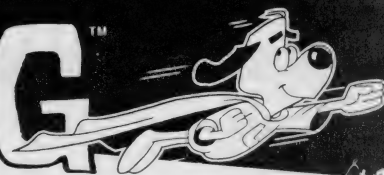
Because Thanksgiving was a family event at home, I had only seen Underdog in the parade on television but never directly in the vinyl, so to speak. By the eighties, when he had become a fond but distant memory, I was invited to a Thanksgiving dinner party one evening on the upper west side in Manhattan. Going into the bathroom, I found the window open and bright lights and a stir of activity outside. Curious, I looked out. Five stories directly below on 77th Street lay Underdog, arms outstretched, slowly filling up as a crew of workers pumped helium into him. I excused myself from the party, went down on the street and watched until he swelled to full stature and gently lifted off the pavement, ready to fly.

I was filled up too, with a feeling I can only describe as parental.

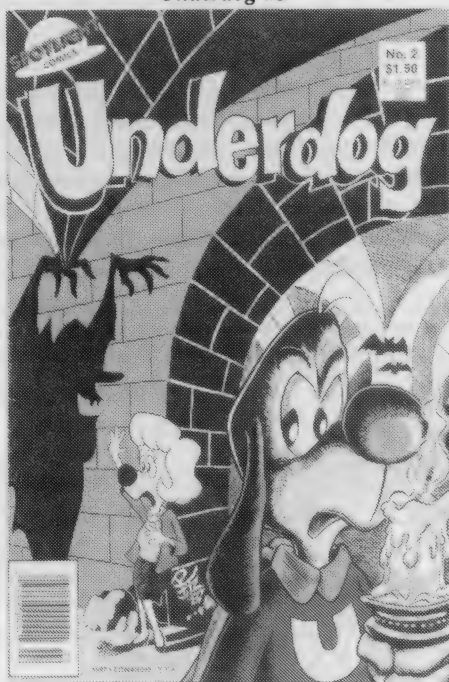
I was glad they had him sand-bagged down though because, knowing him, if he'd gotten loose he'd have been sure to wreck something. --Joe Harris



UNDERDOG™



Pen and ink drawing by Gary Fields for the cover of the never published Spotlight Comics *Underdog* #3



Pete Fitzgerald's cover for the hard-to-find *Underdog* #2

Underdog Theme Song

by Watts Biggers, Treadwell Covington,
Joseph Harris and Chester Stover

When criminals in this world appear
And break the laws that they
Should fear
And frighten all who see and hear
The cry goes up both far and near for
Underdog!
Underdog!

Speed of lightning
Roar of thunder
Fighting all who rob or plunder
Underdog!
Underdog!

When in this world the headlines read
Of those whose hearts are filled with
Greed
Who rob and steal from those who
Need
To right this wrong with blinding speed
Goes
Underdog!
Underdog!

Speed of lightning
Roar of thunder
Fighting all who rob or plunder
Underdog!
Underdog!

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FLYING HIGH WITH UNDERDOG

by Leigh Anne Brodsky

In the entertainment business, a star is only as hot as the celebrity company he keeps. So when Underdog started popping up with the likes of Tom Hanks, Rosie O'Donnell, Brooke Shields and the cast of *Friends*, I knew that loveable, humble Shoeshine Boy and his alter-ego were poised to take off again.

We, at Golden Books Family Entertainment, which has acquired the copyrights to Underdog, have high hopes for the property. Our goal is to extend Underdog's reach through television, home video, and merchandise across the nation and worldwide.

Our first hope was to have Underdog back on TV where he belongs. As of June 1996, *Underdog* cartoons have been appearing on the Cartoon Network, which now airs the classic shows on Sundays at 11:30am. Now not only can Underdog fans get their weekly fix, but they can introduce the character to their kids as well, giving us a whole new generation of fans. We've also put a merchandising program in place featuring Underdog on everything from T-shirts, sweatshirts, sleepwear and caps to jewelry, stationery, temporary tatoos and cookie jars.

Next stop: making the entire world safe for Sweet Polly Purebred. The *Underdog* show now airs in several countries, including Australia, Italy, Latin America, New Zealand, and Spain. We are also currently signing licensing agents to market Underdog products in international markets.

Back in New York, this November, Animazing Gallery, one of the preeminent galleries specializing in animation art, is launching the first ever exhibit of *Underdog* animation cels drawn by creator Joe Harris. The collection will include 350 limited-edition hand-painted cels and two different limited edition sericels of 1000 each. More than 40 original *Underdog* drawings will also be available. The exhibit, the first of its kind in the 33-year history



of *Underdog*, a big hit among fans.

is expected to be collectors and

Animazing will also feature a limited edition sericel that Joe Harris created for World Hunger Year, a national organization founded by the late singer Harry Chapin, to combat hunger worldwide.

This year, WHY has selected Underdog as a spokescharacter for Hungerthon, their annual high-profile on-air radiothon which raises significant funds for the organization on the weekend before Thanksgiving. WHY was looking for a character with high visibility, strong graphic appeal, and a social conscience to represent those who truly are society's "underdogs." And, of course, they

needed a character popular enough to inspire potential donors. *Underdog* creator Joe Harris developed an original logo to be used on T-shirts and sweatshirts which are offered as incentives for contributions. If you're in the New York listening area, we'll hope you tune in to WNEW-FM, 102.7, November 21-23.

And now for an explanation of all that name-dropping earlier: In a recent episode of *Friends*, the characters were all in a dither because somehow the Underdog balloon had become untethered during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and was floating all around New York City. Fortunately, like all *Underdog* story lines, it had a happy ending.

Next, Underdog worked his way into the script of an episode of *Suddenly Susan*, starring Brooke Shields. But best of all was when Tom Hanks appeared on The Rosie O'Donnell Show and, unrehearsed, broke into his rendition of the *Underdog* theme song before a live studio audience. Joe Harris subsequently dropped him a line thanking him for his adulation and Hanks wrote back to the creator to say what a big Underdog fan he is.

There's no question about it: Underdog has become ingrained in American pop culture. His spunk, loyalty, bravery, devotion to his woman, and his noble fight for good vs. evil (not to mention his dashing good looks and his quaint manner of speaking) have struck a chord in TV viewers everywhere. We look forward to continuing to build the momentum and to propelling *Underdog* to new heights in the coming years.

Leigh Anne Brodsky is senior vice president, marketing, Golden Books Entertainment Group and an Underdog fan since she was six years old.

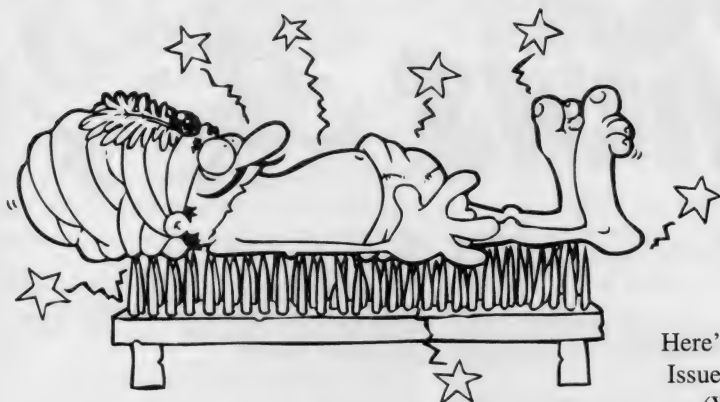


Characters © 1997 Golden Books

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At left: Gary Field's pen and ink artwork for Fantagraphics magazine *Amazing Heroes: Swimsuit Summer Special*

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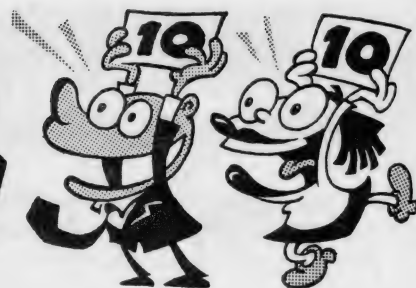
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TOON REVIEWS



In Print

Inside The Mouse

Work and play at Disney World

The Project at Disney

by Jane Kuenz, Karen Klugman,

Susan Willis, Shelton Waldrep

Duke University Press

ISBN 0-8223-1624--2

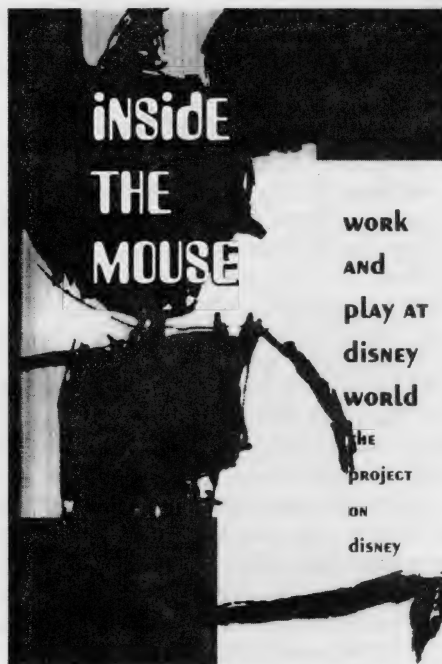
It's not a coffee table book, and it's not as captivating as you may think. It's a sociological study of Disney World. I'm not sure if that fact makes the book extremely highbrow or utterly ridiculous. I wavered between these two choices myself while reading *Inside the Mouse, Work and Play at Disney World. The Project on Disney*.

The book takes the reader on a psychological behind-the-scenes tour of Disney World, focusing not on how many rides and when they were built, but the reasoning behind the park's design, landscape, and methods. We study the "shoppers" (Disney visitors), which will make you very aware of your own reactions upon your next (or first) visit.

It's a challenging read if you are expecting a basic "show me the Disney;" it is not for the traveler who wants to study up before his Florida trip. With a few exceptions, most chapters read like a sociology text. Each chapter is authored by a different member of "The Project," and is devoted to a different aspect of the park, yet all chapters connect. I appreciated the conversational "Under the Influence" chapter, which is a less academic, more "real life" analysis. I wanted to identify with the man who modestly explained, "Don't get me wrong. I'm not anti-Disney."

The Project points out that one of the things the park is planned around is "the importance of sunshine," which is surprising to me since the average "shop-

per" will likely spend 3/4 of the day in theaters. Animation fans won't find any latest technology or mention of characters except from the sociological standpoint in



this book. Although everything is discussed, from trash collection to hiring practices, each is treated purely academically.

It's not that this is an unwarranted book. The fact that "Disney" is synonymous with vacation, reflecting social and traditional ideals of today—practically an institution—of course it's going to be studied. Still, I can't help but think, "why are they beating this dead horse?" Sure, it's *The place to vacation*. It has its own infrastructure, laws, and practices. But it's also A THEME PARK.

A friend asked me what I was reading—when I explained that it was a study done over a number of years, she said "Well, they'll never get those years back!"

--Joan Long

Reviewer Joan Long likes to watch *Duckman* with her Shar-Pei, Phoebe.

Serious Business

The Art and Commerce of Animation in America from Betty Boop to Toy Story

by Stefan Kanfer

1997 Scribner Hardcover \$27.50

265 pages 57 illustrations 12 in color

ISBN 0-684-80079-9

The title of this new book seems to promise fresh insights on the business side of American animation—a traditionally under-reported aspect of the field. When I first picked it up, I was looking forward to learning more about the behind-the-scenes machinations of cartoons as commerce, maybe even reading about production budgets, deal-making, box-office grosses, promotion schemes, and all that nasty product-marketing business associated with action-figure TV series. Toward the end, the book does deliver, but first the reader has to endure a 175-page, uninspired rehash of what is by now the "standard" history of American animated cartoons. It's familiar ground that has been covered before, and more engagingly, by authors such as Leonard Maltin, Donald Crafton and John Canemaker.

Author Stefan Kanfer claims his book is a "labor of love," but the bulk of it reads much more like a research project he was assigned to write. The first three-fourths of the book amounts to a summary of all the previous writings on the development of the Hollywood cartoon, an impression that's only reinforced by his prodigious use of quotations. Now it's perfectly legitimate to sprinkle in anecdotes and quotes from those who were there, but Kanfer goes so far overboard that it leaves the impression he has no viewpoint of his own to contribute. His passage on Winsor McCay includes quotations from no less than thirteen sources. This excessive reliance on citations quickly becomes annoying, especially since a large percentage of

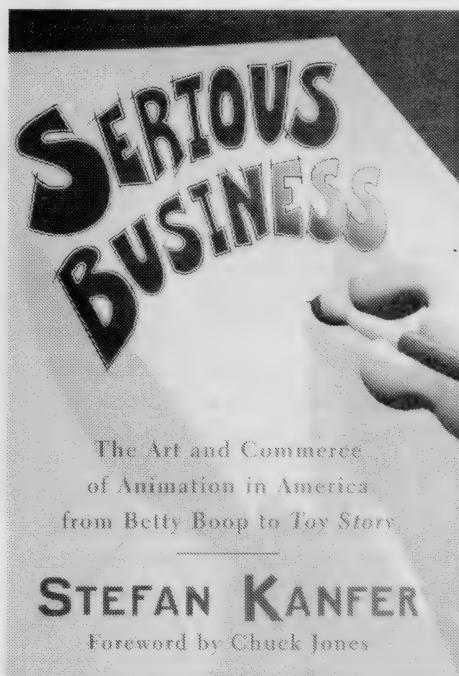
the quotes are from other animation historians or from film critics of the time. Kanfer writes well enough when summarizing the basic facts, but it seems that whenever an analysis or opinion is needed, he defers to what others have already written.

Further casting doubt on Kanfer's familiarity with the subject are persistent misnomers and small factual errors. One of the works most frequently drawn upon is Shamus Culhane's autobiography *Talking Animals and Other People*. For some reason, Kanfer repeatedly calls him "Seamus" Culhane. Warner Brothers director Bob McKimson is referred to as Bob "McKimpson." Even George Lucas is misspelled George "Lukas." At first I thought these might be blamed on the proof-reader or the typesetter, but they occur consistently enough to suggest that Kanfer just doesn't know any better. John Lasseter would be surprised to see his Oscar-winning *Tin Toy* cited as *Tin Drummer*, and The Simpsons director, David Silverman, would assure us that Itchy and Scratchy are parodies of Tom & Jerry, not of "Saturday morning cartoons." Alright, these are nit-picks to be sure, but I should think that any devotee of animation even half as serious as the author claims to be would spot them in a second. Why didn't Kanfer? My impression of a researcher surveying the writings of others might even expand to the impression of an assignment writer working from the summaries of his research assistants.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm quite sure that Kanfer has personally watched several classic cartoons. He even appears to be a close personal friend of Chuck Jones, judging by Chuck's foreword. But it's not until the last quarter of the book that he shows signs of any real involvement with the subject matter. Once he has slogged through the obligatory condensed summary of the history of the Hollywood cartoon through the UPA period, he eventually arrives at the Hanna-Barbera TV era. Here at last we are treated to some heartfelt original opinions. Detractors of schlocky television animation will delight in his barbed commentary. Hanna-Barbera's work is described as "second-hand humor," "bromides in human suits," "shallow characters and obvious gags," and he says it "seldom showed more than a scintilla of originality." Sixties and seven-

ties TV cartoons in general are "travesties of real animation," and "inferior to the creakiest efforts of Terrytoons-previously the low end of cartooning." I am not inclined to argue with him. His overview of the rise of sponsor-driven cartoon series, and the backlash against violent superhero shows is funny, informative, and even a bit chilling.

Here in the final section, the book begins to live up to its title, it's still annoyingly packed with quotes, but there is a



***Serious Business:* The book that launched a thousand quips**

definite aura of original commentary. Kanfer discusses the tradeoffs between costs and quality on TV, and offers a few welcome (if a bit dated) specifics on the commerce of animation, such as Hanna-Barbera grossing \$9 million in 1961. Discussing the period of confusion after Walt Disney's death in 1966, he traces the many attempts by newcomers to duplicate Disney's success with animated features. We learn that Ralph Bakshi, at the expense of alienating Robert Crumb, used the X-rated notoriety of *Fritz The Cat* to parlay an \$850,000 alternative movie into a \$25 million cult hit. Steven Spielberg helped budding Disney wanna-be Don Bluth to find the right sentimental note required to make *An American Tail* a \$45 million smash.

Kanfer gives an engaging overview of the jockeying between Disney, Bluth, and assorted others as they fought for box-office dominance during the years between Walt's death and the release of *The Little Mermaid*, which reasserted Disney's hegemony over the animated feature film.

In a way, I'm almost tempted to recommend *Serious Business*, because these last 60 pages are so refreshingly informative and amusing. But the \$27.50 cover price, the thin and unremarkable selection of illustrations, and the uninspired, annoying first 175 pages are just too much to overcome. Too bad the author didn't confine his effort to the post-UPA period that he seems to have a real feel for. Kanfer's writing strength appears to be in the medium-length, Tom Wolfe-ish, wry-commentary-on-modern-culture vein, and a 60-page essay was probably about right. The re-hashed, condensed review of what Maltin and others have already covered so well reads like something he was coerced into writing in order to come up with a book-length manuscript. In all, *Serious Business* inspires a paraphrase of a favorite Warner's wartime gag: "Is this book really necessary?"

--Doug Ranney

Doug Ranney is president of Tiger Mountain Press, a small-press book publisher. He founded The Whole Toon Catalog, co-authored The Complete Anime Guide, and writes about animation from time to time.

Serious Business (Take 2)

Back when I was in college, my roommate's mother once left a message on our answering machine to inform us that the new *L B Cool John* album had come out. L B Cool John, indeed. It wasn't very hard for us to figure out that she was trying to say *LL Cool J* and while we injured ourselves laughing at her gaffe, we knew that she really meant well in her attempts to keep up with our musical tastes. Lately, I got a similar feeling as I made my way through Stefan Kanfer's *Serious Business, The Art and Commerce of Animation in America from Betty Boop to Toy Story*. It's not a bad book to drop on a friend who knows nothing about animation if he or she ever wants to take the time to read a mercifully abbreviated timeline of where anima-

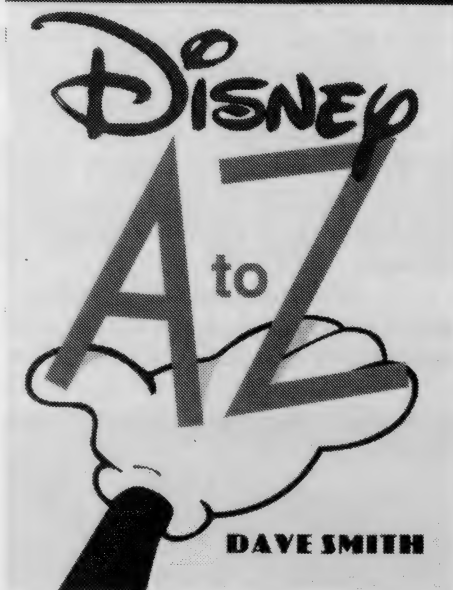
tion has been, but for those in and about the business there's a distinct problem in the details. This is especially obvious in the much less researched last twenty years of animation's history that is, in here, even less researched. Am I nit picking if I bring up Mr. Kanfer's one sentence reference to the Cartoon Network as Ted Turner's Cartoon Channel? Maybe. Did Ren and Stimpy say "Don't Pee on the Third Rail" or was it "Don't whiz on the Electric Fence?" Details, details. I can go on but if a book's press release tell us that it is geared towards "cartoon fanatics and kids of all ages" the details are what they will want. The book jacket makes the claim that on this subject of *Serious Business*, Mr. Kanfer is "the person uniquely qualified to do it justice." I'm still trying to figure out why.

The goal of *Serious Business* seems to be an attempt to show us how animated cartoons have reflected the psyche and social history of the American people and then dares to flip over the beast and let us peer at the seamy underbelly. Well, yes, cartoons have mirrored the American public's views and ideals but what form of media has not? Aside from the obvious traits of racism, sexism, and jingoism redolent in early film, print, radio and television is there anything we've missed? Probably, but Mr. Kanfer never stops long enough to tell us. As far as showing us the business of animation, we learn nothing new there either. We already know that Mr. Mintz stole Oswald the Lucky Rabbit from Mr. Disney and that cartoon shorts died out because of television. We want more than that. We want depth. We at least want the facts checked. Instead we have come home to find a sketchy history of animation left on our answering machine by one of our parents.

--Tom Warburton

Tom Warburton is currently developing a short with the Cartoon Network, has just finished as head designer on the first season of Walt Disney Television's new series *Pepper Ann*, and is considered missing from JJ Sedelmaier Productions where he spent five years as an animator/director and ate lunch at a lousy mall almost every day.

Editor's note: Please imagine the JJ's next to the "Sedelmaier" are printed with red ink. This will save us a fortune on the print bill and Mr. JJ Sedelmaier will think he's very special.



Disney A to Z
The Official Encyclopedia
by Dave Smith
Hyperion 564 pages \$29.95

Archivist Dave Smith and Associates have assembled an impressive compilation of everything Disney. Animation, television series, characters, feature film, and parks - it's all here! While mainly interested in the animation entries, I fondly remember the *Spin and Marty* and *Elfego Baca* television series. I was shocked to find more entries than I recall from my youth.

As the title implies, information is formatted as it strictly applies to the Disney version of the world. I fully realize the need to limit the scope of entries to facts and information as it pertains to Disney. However, a bowl of soup at the now defunct Buena Vista Country Club garners more ink than the incomparable Rita Moreno. It would have been nice to at least mention her unique status as recipient of the four major awards in entertainment - Oscar, Tony, Grammy and Emmy.

Keeping in mind that Dave Smith is still an employee of Disney, I give him high marks overall for making facts foremost. Jeff Katzenberg is given due credit for bringing Disney to the top of the heap. Speaking of straight facts, Eisner's bio could be the most sterile entry in the entire book. Resumé or obit? Only the corporate lawyer who wrote it knows for sure. I was pleased to see Ub Iwerks represented

with an extensive entry. Included is a mention of his incredible 700 drawings-a-day output on the first Mickey Mouse cartoon, *Plane Crazy*. Please don't forward angry corrections to ANiMATO! I know *Steamboat Willie* (November 1928) is Disney's official debut of Mickey Mouse. Sound and hoopla don't change the fact that *Plane Crazy* was finished and screened in the summer of 1928. (Mickey's birthday is May, 1928.) While Smith states that *Plane Crazy* was the first Mickey cartoon, he makes the clear distinction that after sound was added *Plane Crazy* was released as the third Mickey Mouse cartoon.

My favorite park anecdote is the Monsanto House of the Future listing. Built in 1957, the all plastic house was deemed outdated by 1967 and scheduled for demolition. Unfortunately, the huge wrecking ball bounced harmlessly off the resilient structure. Exasperated, the crew had to slowly dismantle the home piece by piece with crowbars, saws and blowtorches.

Disneyhead baby-boomers are likely to get the most out of this book. I personally expect to refer to it on occasion, secure in the knowledge Dave Smith has done his very best to present a factual reference for Disney lovers.

--Patrick Duquette

PSST!

WANNA PEEK AT ISSUE #39?
WANNA KNOW WHY KANFER
WAS RIGHT ABOUT ANiMATO!?
WANNA HEAR ABOUT OUR
PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?
TURN TO PAGE 61



TOON

The Cartoon Role Playing Game

Steve Jackson Games

208 pages \$19.95

ISBN 1-55634-197-0

Question: Ever had an urge to swing on a vine with Ursula? Want to drink beer with Homer Simpson and Hank Hill? How would Stimpny rescue Sweet Polly Purebred from the clutches of Wile E. Coyote?

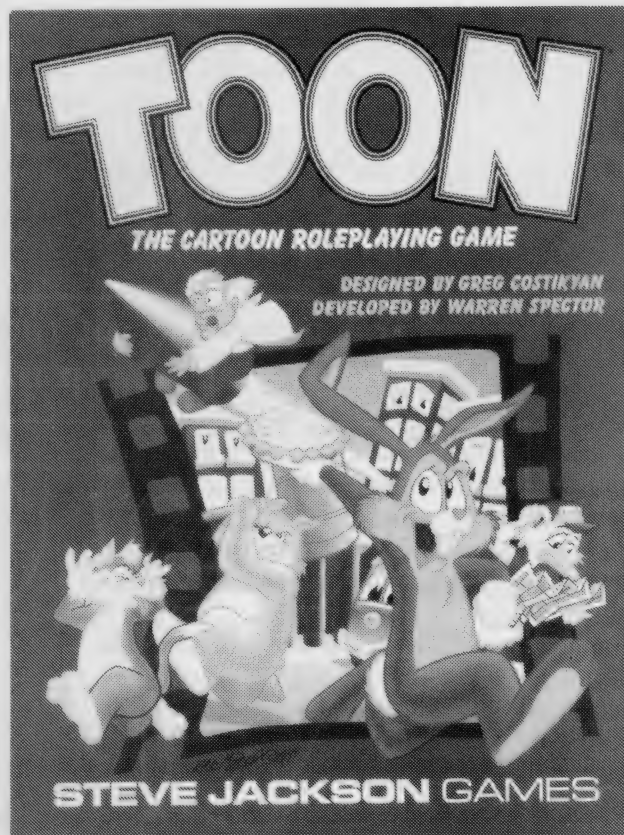
The real question is: How much fun can you absorb? Because this game is fun! You won't need batteries, a Gold Card, or a CPU with a FPU, Sound Blaster, joystick and 120 megabytes of RAM. You only need your imagination, a pencil, two six-sided dice and a few silly friends.

If you're familiar with role playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons* or *Runequest*—then forget everything! The primary rule for TOON is to "act before you think."

Not to be confused with TOON the magazine, published by Michael Swanigan and Darrell McNeil, TOON the game allows you to play the cartoon character of your choice in long (Features) or short (Shorts, Quick Flicks or Series) scenarios directed by "The Animator" (Game Master). Players can use pre-generated 'toons from the book, create your own characters from scratch, or use the attributes of any established cartoon star. Steve Jackson Games can't put Bugs, Mickey or Popeye in this game, but there's nothing to stop you from playing Mickey Mouse in the privacy of your own abode. The possibilities are limited only by your own imagination. The mind reels at the combinations. Porky Pig can finally appear with Roger Rabbit and no studio lawyers can stop you! Muhahaha! (That's right! All you sub-culture Babs Bunny fanatics can interact with your favorite anthropomorphic female.)

Each character has basic attributes of Muscle, Zip, Smarts and Chutzpah with 23 related skills which help (or hinder) progress through the scenario. In addition to the mundane abilities like climbing,

running and jumping, 'toons can also draw from the category Shtick. Shtick is interesting because it gives characters a unique skill or asset which can become their trademark in the game. Example: "Bag of Many Things", "Flying" and "Stretching". You can add anything your little 'toon heart desires for a price in Plot Points. Also game structure is open enough to add your own creations. Say, for example, "Spinach Gives Enormous Strength".



Toons must also have Goals and Beliefs as part of their character's make up. Usually something simple like "Eats Cheese-Hates Cats" is enough motivation to drive an entire Short or even a Feature.

Natural Enemies is self-explanatory. If your chosen Species is Cat, you are required to chase Mice, even when it's not convenient. You can also expect Dogs to make your life miserable.

The real fun comes from interacting with friends as each person's 'toon tries to accomplish specified goals within the scenario. Plot Points are awarded to your 'toon if certain conditions are fulfilled.

By the time you've run through a

few adventures, you'll be ready to write your own scenario with a seasoned character. Don't be shy. This is one of the easiest role playing games on the market.

Some of the supplied scenarios are downright hilarious. Consider playing the series *Car Blazers* with their Beetleship "Tomato". Or the feature, *Mars Needs Creampuffs*. Or the short, *Jerks On A Beanstalk*. Loads of laughs.

Though not required, you can use PVC cartoon figures as markers. It's useful to know who is standing behind you when pies or anvils are flying about. Note: No characters are killed in this game. An anvil to the noggin will render a 'toon unconscious (depending on Hit Points) for a specific amount of time. When the 'toon "wakes up" he could find himself buried up to his neck in sand. Or worse. Remember, anything goes in the world of TOON!

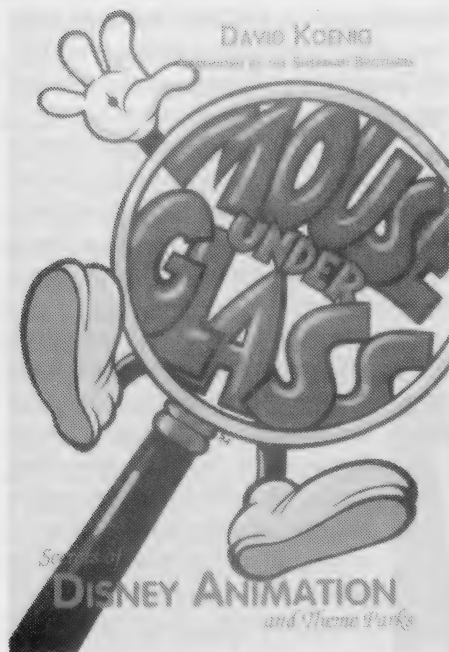
TOON originally appeared in 1984 as a 64-page rule book. All the kinks have been worked out through countless play sessions. This book collects all the subsequent supplements (*Toon Silly Stuff*, *Son of Toon* and *Toon Strikes Again*) into one 208-page Deluxe Edition. My only quibble or nit to pick is the cheesy glue binding which allows the pages to loosen easily. An optimist would suggest this is a good thing since players might want to use only certain pages for a particular scenario.

I can't think of anyone among our enthusiastic readers who wouldn't enjoy this game. Pump up the *Carl Stalling Project* on the stereo and practice your Marvin Martian voice! One final suggestion: For the ultimate TOON experience, invite Linda Simensky, John Dilworth and Marv Newland over for an evening of fun. Let the anvils fall where they may!

--Patrick Duquette

For more information write to:

Steve Jackson Games
PO Box 18957
Austin, TX 78760-9844



Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation and Theme Parks

by David Koenig

Bonaventure Press (1997)

270 Pages \$23.95 (Hardcover)

ISBN# 0-9640605-0-7

Despite a few glaring errors and the unnecessary "cookbook" theme for each chapter, I found *Mouse Under Glass* an entertaining and interesting read. Almost immediately, (page 11) Koenig made me wary of his credentials when he referred to Rick Marschall's comic strip and cartoon art magazine *Hogan's Alley* as "the animation trade magazine". Even East Coast Spago-avoiding wise guys know that *Animation* magazine is the trade journal for the animation industry. Another reference, on page 132, placed Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* "in the African wild." It really takes place in a jungle in India. I mention these minor oversights because a portion of each segment on Disney feature animation is given to "Bloopers" and original source material differences.

Koenig's strong suit is his access to an impressive list of animation insiders like Joe Grant, Bill Peet, Tom Sito, Maurice Papf and others for insights and anecdotes. When Koenig sticks to the insider stuff the book just sails along on the writer's easy style of communicating the written word. Very much like sharing a secret with a friend. And just like friends telling stories to entertain, sometimes facts get overlooked

in their enthusiasm to deliver the goods.

The previous paragraphs notwithstanding, I liked Koenig's inclusion of capsuled accounts of original source material for comparison with Disney's final version. For all the hue and cry about Disney altering source material, in *Hunchback* for example, I would venture a guess the average moviegoer has never read *Notre Dame de Paris*. If nothing else, Disney has people pronouncing "Notre Dame" correctly and realizing it's not about a backfield runner from South Bend. So thanks to Koenig's capsules, readers can compare Disney versions and the original stories with reasonable confidence at Eisner's next cocktail party. Personally, I think Disney takes way too much heat for altering source material. Tom Sito said it best: "Pocahontas was a twelve-year-old maiden who went around topless. Do you *really* want an accurate portrayal?"

Each feature film segment also has intriguing sections like Plot Holes, Bloopers, Strange Reactions, Cutting Room Floor and Hidden Images. A quick word about Hidden Images. There is a group on the 'net devoted to "verifying" or "debunking" Hidden Images at theme parks and in Disney films. And you thought watching *Pocahontas* one-frame-at-a-time was pointless!

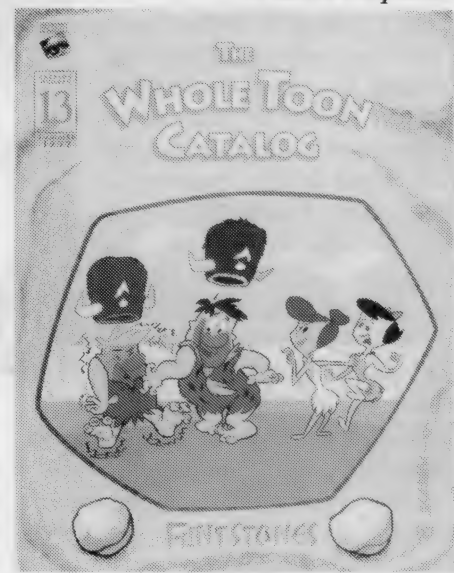
The book is also sprinkled with irreverent lists like: (1.) The amusing Orphan-O-Meter with numerical ratings of the Pity Quotient. (2.) The weird Top 10 Disney oddities. (3.) The interesting Hearing Voices which compares suggested voice talent to actual people who worked on *Lady and The Tramp*. (4.) The extreme Disney Tragedy Trivia. If you score high on the Tragedy Trivia you probably need a life. Here's two examples: How many times does Snow White scream in terror? And the number of Disney features that show heavy drinking or drunkenness? None of the answers listed for the drinking/drunkenness question is actually correct. The drinking question was covered in depth by Diane W. Penkoff in *Slipping 'Em A Mickey: A Content Analysis Of Drinking In Disney Animated Films*. (Animation Journal, Spring 1993) Penkoff compiled a massive list of examples broken down by type and gender. I thought at first the Tragedy Trivia quiz was satire, but the Hidden Images gang is serious, so I reasoned the

Tragedy Troopers were on the level.

David Koenig brings up one my pet peeves: "Disney puts so many key sequences in its previews of coming attractions that you feel as if you've seen the whole movie months before it's released". Amen, David, Amen!

Koenig does a credible treatment on the dynamics behind *Song of the South* with emphasis on Maurice Rapf's version of the events and politics involved. For me, Rapf's insights on *Song of the South* and other projects was the best part of the book. Casual animation fans and baby boomers will likely find *Mouse Under Glass* amusing and entertaining. Hard core fans may not be happy with the total package because they are already aware of many of the anecdotes and lists. (like the suggested names for The Seven Dwarfs.) Also the hard core would expect the book to be more explosive than it is. I expect a few interviewees held back a few bombshells in deference to their continued employment in the animation business. As I stated at the outset, it's an interesting read.

--Patrick Duquette



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All reviews by John Beam

Burn-Up W

File 3: Policetown Assault!

File 4: Policetown Assault! — Part 2

A.D. Vision Films Release

Color, 35 minutes, VHS Hi-Fi Surround

Contains Graphic Violence and Mature Situations

Burn-Up W is one of those titles which seem to come out far too often, which jumps out at you (or at male viewers anyway), not because of its cinematic brilliance, but because the main characters are well-endowed young women. And I have no problem with that, as long as there can be a thread of a plot that can keep my interest beyond the bouncy bits of female anatomy. And *Burn-Up W* does that. It requires little thought of who the characters are or why events happen the way they do. There's an involving storyline here, though, and that sets this apart from it being simply a girly show. I will admit that anime such as this is rather prevalent nowadays, and I will go so far to say that there are far too little really decent titles, and far too many exploiting ones on the market. However, this one tries not to take itself very seriously, and that sets this one apart from most.

As with many anime of this genre, the main characters are mostly women, and are typically large-breasted and otherwise "healthy." Another typical feature is that they are also members of an elite police force in a futuristic setting. The main protagonist in this particular two-part story is Rio, who is hounded by creditors, and forced to sell her underwear to an underground store which caters to perverted businessmen. Unable to do this (since she was unsuccessful in persuading the proprietor that she was underage!), she hides from the collectors at the apartment of a friend and fellow police officer named Chisato.

From this point on, matters become serious. The "Virtual Drug Syndi-

cate" are miffed because a police raid has resulted in the loss of a device which was obviously important to their future operations. In response, they display their ability to use members of the police by artificially releasing "Endomorphine Beta" within their brains, and manipulating them. In a related incident, a manipulated pawn of the VDS kills Rio's friend, Chisato, as well as many others in the Policetown Financial Department. This is merely a display of power, but Rio and her colleagues aren't going to let the VDS get away with it, even when top police within their department are working against them, and two maniacal (and practically indestructible) killers are wreaking havoc within Policetown itself.

I must say I was surprised at how emotionally involving this story became once the comedic beginning had run its course (part of which involved one character taking target practice on a bank robber on her day off). Rio's loss of her friend Chisato is genuinely touching, and gives the whole story a different dimension I hadn't expected. The character designs are not all that original, but they are well-rendered throughout, and expertly animated. Also high on my list of pluses is the rousing opening animation, which is particularly well done (nice opening song too).

OK, I like animation that contains well-endowed gals in battle-gear, guns ablaze, with a bit of cheesecake to boot. But I think *Burn-Up W* is more than that, and although it isn't what I would place in my list of anime masterpieces, it is thought-evoking enough to where I'm not always thinking about the characters' anatomy. If there is anything about these videos I object to, it is that the program itself is only about 25 minutes of animation, while the packaging says "35 minutes." Also, I think it would have been appropriate to place both episodes on one tape instead of requiring people to buy one tape per episode. The price also doesn't reflect what one should be expected to pay for a program that is so short. A.D. Vision Films needs to cut about ten dollars off their price, and about five minutes off the commercial plugs; otherwise, *Burn-Up W* actually exceeds my expectations.



Neon Genesis Evangelion:

Genesis 0:1

AD Vision Film Release

Subtitled, Color, VHS Hi-Fi Stereo

60 Minutes

Contains Violence and Mature Situations

Approximately twelve years before *Neon Genesis Evangelion* first aired on Japanese television in 1995, the group which created it: animation fans, science fiction writers and artists, formed Gainax, and changed the face of Japanese animation. Their first project, the animated feature *Wings of Honneamise* (1987), launched these animation rebels into world-wide prominence, and with such outstanding series as *Aim for the Top! Gunbuster*, *Nadia of the Mysterious Seas* and *Otaku No Video*, their prominence has never wavered. With *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, the group at Gainax have totally outdone themselves.

As with many Japanese animated tales, it is set in the near-future, and involves alien invaders threatening the existence of mankind. In the year 2000, just fifteen years prior to the events covered in the first two episodes, a strange being (referred to in later volumes as "Adam") lands in Antarctica, and without warning it self-destructs, melting the ice cap, completely

changing Earth's climate to temperate, throwing us off our axis, and wiping out half of humanity. Strangely, certain children are born nine months after this event who are endowed with the talents necessary to save the human race from extinction.

Now, it is the year 2015, and enormous, hideously ugly creatures called "Angels" are threatening the survival of humanity. Angels can protect themselves with "Absolute Terror" (or AT) fields, which deflect any conventional attacks against them. Besides this, they are also capable of summoning energy weapons that wield incredible destructive power. To combat this coming threat (partly learned, interestingly enough from the Dead Sea Scrolls), a special UN agency called NERV was formed, and using knowledge that was gathered from the earlier "Adam" appearance, they have created "Evas," enormous bio-mechanical humanoid weapons. It just so happens that the children mentioned earlier (beginning with a young man named Shinji), now nearly fifteen years-old, can link telepathically with the Evas, and are chosen to pilot these weapons and fight for the salvation of all mankind.

If I were simply going to comment on the story alone (a fine mix of science fiction and philosophies and terminology from ancient mystery religions), I would say I am fascinated with it. However, there is SO much more to this Japanese television presentation. The characters are well developed, the character and mechanical designs are handsome, and the animation is incredible. Two original Gainax staff members, Hideaki Anno (Screenplay/Storyboards, Mechanical Designs and Series Director), and Yoshiyuki Sadamoto (Character Designs) have contributed to nearly every Gainax project, and their assistance to Project Eva/Neon Genesis Evangelion was certainly essential to its success. Despite the fact I have only seen the earliest episodes, *Evangelion* is the best animated television series I have ever seen. It is definitely a series I will follow to the very end.

To truly understand what is going on with this series requires research. Terms such as "N2 Mines," "Second Impact," and "first child" came into play; and if you are an impatient viewer, you will become anxious waiting for everything to be explained

(or if you are like me, you'll search the internet to find explanations). However, the story, characters, and action sequences keep the ball rolling. With nine volumes of *Evangelion* now available (episodes 1-18 out of 26), it may be a good idea to try out the first one, and upon becoming a fan of it (it is so outstanding, why wouldn't you?), buy the rest. Highly recommended.

Crusher Joe The Movie

AnimEigo Release

125 Minutes, VHS, Mono, hi-fi

Contains Violence, Partial Nudity and Adult Situations.

It is unfortunate that here in the United States, few current animation directors are given much (if any) recognition for their work (Ralph Bakshi and Don Bluth are the rare exceptions). For example, I was struck that Disney's current film *Hercules* was "By the creators of *The Little Mermaid* and *Aladdin*..." instead of any specific person or persons. However, in Japan, audiences have been treated to more than their share of animation directors who place their mark on their films; men such as Hayao Miyazaki (*My Neighbor Totoro*), Katsuhiro Otomo (*Akira*), and the director of *Crusher Joe The Movie*, Yasuhiko Yoshikazu. Not only are these men afforded the liberty to create films as they see fit, many of them are revered in Japan with a respect unheard of in our media experience.

The work and dedication Yasuhiko Yoshikazu put into *Crusher Joe* certainly earned him the respect of his audiences, and would probably impress most of his peers. Not only did he direct the film, co-write the screenplay, design the characters, draw the storyboards, and direct much of the animation; he also was one of the Key Animators, a workload for an individual I have yet to see matched for a film of this magnitude. And this is a good film. Mind you, I've seen better films by Mr. Yoshikazu, but taken into account that it was originally released back in 1983, it is certainly a film which rates very high for the period in which it was made.

Crusher Joe The Movie is about a team of four talented mercenaries who act as interplanetary troubleshooters called "Crushers," and are lead by a young man



known only as "Joe." As the film begins, our heroes are hired to transport a young woman in cryogenic suspension who, we are told, is in need of immediate medical care. A simple enough job for a group who are usually flying by the seats of their pants (and the money is good), so they take on this job. However, things get VERY complicated upon the start of their mission. Their ships warp-drive apparently goes haywire, sending them to the wrong sector, where they find that their money, their clients, and their "Cargo" are all gone. Not only this, but they find authorities from the United Space Force waiting to arrest them for illegal trafficking and anything else they can pin on them.

Well, Joe is not the sort who will sit back and wait for circumstances to die down. His good name has been besmirched, and he plans to do something about it. There are people who seem intent on helping Joe and his team in finding out what happened to them, almost giving the impression of being too convenient to be believed. There are ulterior motives at work with Joe's beneficiaries; though, in a play for power in which the whole universe is at stake. At the heart of everything is a machine which not only can jump individual ships into space-warp, but can also target

other ships with an external manipulation warp field which can send them practically anywhere. The cryogenically suspended woman is the key to operating this device, but unfortunately, both the device and it's creator have fallen in the wrong hands, causing Joe and his friends to concern themselves with grounds for taking action beyond the original case of vengeance and clearing their names.

Your typical STTNG fan ought to appreciate this movie. It has a neat plot, interesting characters, cool space theory, and well-choreographed action sequences. There is a nice mix of humor along the way, as well as effective and believable dramatic sequences. Sometimes the animation isn't the greatest, but all-in-all *Crusher Joe The Movie* is very well-produced. Being a manga (comic book) artist, Yoshikazu's designs do not suffer any of the sameness which plagues some anime that have the oh-so-big-eyed-look. His style carries over in so many areas in this that it would be impossible to mistake it as being from anyone else.

A few more interesting points regarding *Crusher Joe The Movie*. The creator of the original *Crusher Joe* novel is a gentleman by the name of Takachiho Haruka, who also created the popular *Dirty Pair* series. Giving some indication of the intent to give the *Dirty Pair* protagonists Kei and Yuri larger roles later on, they make a cameo in a drive-in movie during the film. Nothing is achieved from this diversion other than a moment of fun and frolic, but it is a certain historic first in anime history, and a must for fans of Kei and Yuri. Highly Recommended.

Night On The Galactic Railroad

Central Park Media Release
Color, 115 minutes, stereo

If there was ever a film I liked that I would have to say "this isn't for everyone," *Night on the Galactic Railroad* is it. There is very little action, the pace is terribly slow at times, and the tone of the film is rather solemn. To add to this; and this may scare some of you away for sure, it is very philosophical and thought evoking. In fact, when I first viewed this movie, I spent nearly the entire film wondering what exactly the point of the film was. It isn't until the very end where we find the real mean-

ing of *Night on the Galactic Railroad*, but once everything is tied together, I found it to be a very satisfying experience.

The story is about an unfortunate young boy named Giovanni, and his only friend Campanella. Giovanni's father is in jail for illegal poaching, his mother is ill, and he is forced to fend for his family by working both before and after school. As this is going on, Giovanni's studies are sliding, and his fellow classmates torment him for his apparent dimness and his father's incarceration. To add to his torment, he must spend the night of the Festival of the Stars getting milk for his mother instead of spending the time with his friend Campanella.

However, the dairy hasn't any milk to give once Giovanni arrives, so he waits in a grassy field, staring off into the heavens. As he ponders the stars, suddenly a train appears before him, and he finds himself traveling throughout the universe. Mysteriously, Campanella is there too. Together, they experience a magical mystery tour of sorts, filled with metaphoric symbolism, both religious and secular. Many passengers embark and take their leave on this trip. The most tragic part is when three young people arrive, having just experienced the sinking of the *HMS Titanic*. This is one of the most emotionally jarring moments I have ever seen in an animated film. The final destination is Heaven itself.

Throughout this journey, Giovanni believes Campanella came to be with him merely to keep him company. However, Campanella is taking this journey for reasons other than to be with his friend, and eventually we find that Giovanni was invited along to keep him company. *Night on the Galactic Railroad* is based upon a 1927 Japanese literary classic by Miyazawa Kenji. The literary style certainly suggest why the film has a less-than-conventional narrative. The time when this was written also suggests how fresh the *Titanic* disaster still was in the minds of people during that era. However, what is truly fascinating about this story is how the author incorporates his thinking in a way which transcends culture and time. This was certainly the work of a genius, and this film is a wonderful adaptation of it. Highly recommended.

Ushio & Tora

Volume One

A.D. Vision Films Release
Color, 60 Minutes, Hi-Fi Surround
Contains Graphic Violence

There is obviously a part of what it means to be Japanese which is tied to stories such as this. There is a yearning for mysticism and dark legends of Japan's distant past. Whether Ushio & Tora can be said to have anything to do with that, or if it is all from the mind of manga artist Kazuhiro Jujita, I suppose that would have to be determined by people who are far more learned about such things than I. However, one thing is probably certain, and that is the legends were never so much fun before animated films were invented.

This particular tale is about a young man named Ushio Aotsuki who is descended from a long line of priests who have cared for his family's temple. According to legend, one of Ushio's ancestors trapped a terrible demon by impaling it on the end of his spear, and at the same time, implanting the spear point into a large stone. Having captured the monster, he erected the Aotsuki Family temple over the monster, where it has been imprisoned for 500 years. Well, all this hokum is just that to Ushio, and he is rather tired of all the nonsense surrounding his family history, and he just wants to be a normal teenager.

Things change when he stumbles upon a basement where he finds the monster. The monster implores Ushio to release him, but having said he would immediately eat him once this is done, Ushio insures the spear is secure, and then re-locks the basement door. However, by merely upsetting what had been for 500 years, Ushio has allowed the monster to summon other evil spirits, and they threaten not only his life, but the lives of his entire community. Now, he is forced to deal with the monster directly, and Ushio releases him by withdrawing the spear.

The monster believes he can take quick advantage of Ushio's youth and inexperience; however, it finds that Ushio isn't what he seems to be. Upon taking the spear in his hand, Ushio transforms into the image of the ancestor who imprisoned the monster in the first place, scaring the wits out of him. Now, Ushio (or rather his alter-

ego) takes charge over the monster, whom he names *Tora* because of his tiger-like characteristics (*tora* means tiger in Japanese), and both of them deal with the demonic threat. There will be an uneasy alliance between the two, which ends either when all of the evil *Tora* initially summoned is gotten rid of (and Ushio can put him back where he came from), or when *Tora* can catch Ushio without his spear, and is able to finally eat him.

I have seen other anime tales which are similar to this one (*Tenchi Muyo!* especially), which could suggest this story is derived from a common history. However, I think I would like this one more if it had something more going on between the two characters. I'd also like to see more of a boy/girl interest going on with Ushio and one of the female characters. I am also not at all enamored with the character designs. However, despite the problems, I like this story so far. The *Tora* character is actually appealing, and I hope that upon seeing future episodes of this, Ushio will be able to reconcile his differences with *Tora* (as long as *Tora* doesn't eat him first).

Street Fighter II V,

Volumes 1-4

Manga Video Release

VHS Color, Hi-Fi Stereo

Approximately 85 minutes each

Contains Violence

For fans of the *Street Fighter 2* video game. Capcom, having produced a very successful feature-length film a few years ago, obviously decided that a television series was in order. Yet while the character designs and slick animation of the movie worked very well, the same designs coupled with limited animation looks very poor indeed. Some of the fighting sequences are well-staged and executed, but overall it does not look much better than the *Street Fighter 2* series that airs on USA Network. The story isn't all that interesting either, unless chance meetings and senseless fighting is your thing.

Seventeen year-old Ken Masters and his long-time friend Ryu go globe-trotting across three continents in search for the perfect fighting technique (after USAF airman Guile easily teaches them a little respect). After a brief encounter in Hong Kong with Thai assassins (and a few

days of fun with teenage versions of Chun Li and Fei Long), Ryu gets arrested in Bangkok in a frame-job, being accused of drug possession. Seems the Thai bad guys want to get revenge, but Ryu actually finds in prison a friend in Sagat, who later becomes his heated enemy in the *SFII* movie (and the video game).

After busting the Thai crime ring, Ken and Ryu head to India to learn the secret of *Ki* and *Hadou* from Dhalsim (is it becoming apparent that the whole cast of the game is going to appear before this series is over?). There, they run into yet



Ushio & Tora

more bad guys, subdue them, and learn that they must overcome more than the evil they encounter from the outside. Stay tuned for more action, mayhem and how our intrepid young heroes learn how to master the secret of the *Hadou-ken* (the super move Ken and Ryu use to finish off their opponents in the video game).

I think I could have gotten more into this series (24 episodes in all) if there was just a little more care put into the visual content. The *SFII Movie* was not much better than this in terms of plot development, but it was incredibly well-animated. The *Street Fighter II V* animation and backgrounds look as though they were

rushed, and some of the sequences are handled very clumsily indeed. Also for some odd reason, Manga Video decided to replace the original opening and closing credit sequences and music with clips of fight sequences from the series, combined with music that was scored to fit. This may not bother most people, but I happen to like most of the opening and closing credits for anime television programs, and this alternate bit of editing was a rather big let-down.

Macross Plus The Movie

Manga Video Release

Color, VHS Hi-Fi Stereo, 115 minutes

Contains Violence, Partial Nudity and Adult Situations

As far back as the mid-fifties, the Japanese have thrilled to the exploits of stories with futuristic settings, where heroic pilots or dutiful robots battled against giant monsters or alien threats. One of the best examples of these never-ending series is *Macross*, which began as a television program back around 1982 (televised in the US as part of the *Robotech* saga). Since its initial television run, *Macross* has spawned at least one other television sequel, two OVA (direct-to-video) releases, and two movies. Well, to be honest, the second movie is actually a compilation of the second OVA series (*Macross Plus*); however, since there are a few new scenes which link the episodes so they run together with some fluidity, it sort of qualifies as an entity in its own right.

This particular spin-off retains some of the original elements of the original, such as the musically-inclined heroine, one particularly heroic pilot who is romantically linked to the heroine, and a "Zentraedi" presence. However, in this case, rather than the Zentraedi being enemies who are bent on destroying mankind, they have apparently made amends, and now even fight side-by-side with humans. *Macross Plus* deals primarily with three characters: Guld, a Zentraedi descendant who is a top test pilot for a new fighter project; Isamu, a human pilot who is a rival to Guld for the new test project; and Myung, who is linked to both characters romantically, and also regarding a new mind-controlled computer system which is part of

(Continued on page 64)

NEW YORK NOTES



by Eric Lurio

Reviews and comments on theatrical and video releases direct from the Big Apple.

HERCULES

Everybody knew that Hercules wasn't going to be a completely original story—we've been okay with that for years. But did it have to be so derivative?

I'm not talking about being faithful to the original Greek myths, (nobody would have accused them of that, although they do mention some of the stories in passing), but *Superman I* and the *Karate Kid*.

Okay, Jor-el...er...Zeus (voiced by Rip Torn and sketched by Anthony DeRosa) doesn't shoot baby Kal...er...Herc (sketched by Randy Haycock) down to earth in a rocket ship, the little tyke is kidnapped by the comic relief henchman Pain (Bob Goldthwaite and James Lopez) and Panic (Matt Frewer and Brian Ferguson), who in the fine Disney tradition bungle the job, and our hero is picked up by Ma and Pa Kent (Hal Holbrook and Barbara Barrie, sketched by Richard Bazley) who discover his...you get the idea. Wait it gets worse....

Haycock draws the gawky teen-aged Clar, er, Herc to look exactly like George Reeves. It's a perfect likeness. Young Herc is a klutz with super-strength, who manages to destroy the local agora in a single bound. Nobody seems to like him. What happens next is almost a word for word copy of the second part of *Superman I*.

But this is Disney, and our Clark

can't become Superman without a side-kick, so Jor-el gives him Pegasus (sketched by Ellen Woodbury) and sends him to Mr. Myagi, who for legal reasons is a satyr called Phil (Danny DeVito and Eric Goldberg). This isn't as blatant a copy of the *Karate Kid* as the first part is of *Superman I*, although there is at least one out and out steal. By the time he's ready to go out into the world, he's got the cape, the pecs, everything but the H on his chest.

Ah, but what of Lois Lane (Meg, Susan Egan and Ken Duncan)? She's there alright, but she's working for Lex Luthor (Hades, James Woods and Nik Ranieri), who had Wonderboy (as he's called in the

film) kidnapped in the first place...

Back in the fifties, DC Comics sued Fawcett Comic's Captain Marvel out of existence for much less. The only reason there isn't a restraining order this time is that the mouse has scarier lawyers than the wabbit.

So much for the lawsuit, now what about the movie? What saves this flick are the music and the villains. James Woods, like Gene Hackman before him is a very happy villain, and that's the way Nik Ranieri draws him. When we first see him, in a replay of the opening of *Sleeping Beauty*, he floats across the scene with quiet nonchalance...He has a real beef, he seems to be the only one of the gods to have a real job, which he really seems to enjoy. 500,000,000 served! His comic relief side-kicks are nowhere nearly as good.

But the best part is the music. This is Alan Menken's best work since *Aladdin*. The Muses, voiced by Charl Freeman, LaChanze, Roz Ryan, Venese Thomas, and Lillias White and sketched by Michel Show, steal, rather, save the show. When they are on the screen, the movie comes alive like in the very best of Disney's previous animated features. The middle of the film, where Herc, Phil and Pegasus celebrate the joys of merchandising, is the best. Mainly because they are in the background while the muses do their thing. It's almost worth getting the CD.



"You couldn't stop with ripping off my origin, you had to go for the spit curl too!"

The rest of the plot, which is again like *Superman I* (Meg dies, Wonderboy gets his powers back, he saves Olympus and then goes to Hell where he saves Meg's soul and brings her back to life... Superman saves Lois by going back in time a few minutes) is totally predictable. In fact this is the most predictable feature Disney's A team has ever done.

It's best not to compare this with *Beauty and the Beast* or *Aladdin*, but rather this year's live action movies. In this it acquits itself pretty well.

CATS DON'T DANCE

"Disney has made brilliant films," David Kirschner, told *Newsweek* magazine last spring, "But if I'd done those same films, they would've made \$1.50."

You see the nature of the problem. Kirschner thought he had finally gotten it right. His people at Turner Feature Animation (Formerly the Hanna-Barbera Features division, now an empty office building) were just as good at making pictures move as Disney. *The Pagemaster* is an excellent piece of craftsmanship, though a mediocre movie. The problem was somewhere else.

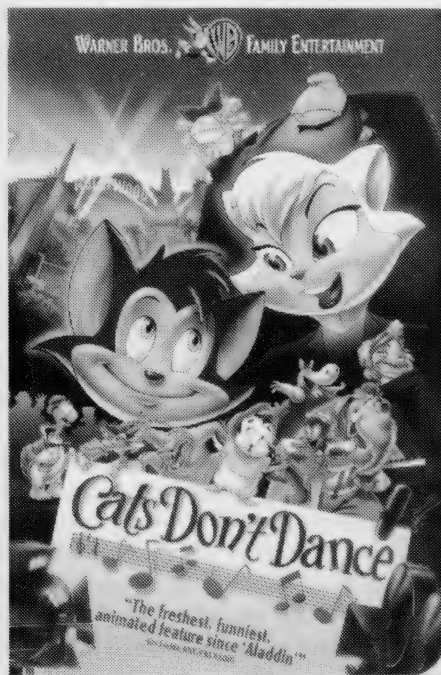
So in 1993 he decided the best way to go was *not* to make a movie for little children (*Once Upon a Forest*), not something that was superficially educational (*The Pagemaster*) but something he himself would like to see. So he contacted Gene Kelly, animator Mark Dindall, and some people who were just laid off from *The Thief and the Cobbler* and set to work on an old fashioned movie musical.... *Cats Don't Dance*.

So far so good. But Hollywood hates cartoons. It really does. Most of the people outside that part of the business couldn't care less about 'toons and think they're either scatological trash or babyfood. Ted Turner likes cartoons but the people he hired to run some of his properties couldn't care less. Art director Brian McEntee told *Animation* magazine the following story:

"[exec] Dawn Steel came in and said 'Why don't you make the main character a duck instead of a cat? Because my daughter likes ducks.' Of course were half-way through development and already animating and you *can't* change the cat into a

duck at this point. We always tried to be very polite so that it wouldn't turn into a war, but it would always kind of end up turning into...."

Miracle of miracles, despite half a dozen execs who hated animation overseeing the project, it was indeed finished. And much to the satisfaction of everyone involved it was just as good, if not better, than some of Disney's official numbered fare over the past eight years. But that was just over half the battle...



Cats Don't Dance Video Box

The *Pagemaster* was at the licensing show two years prior to its release in theaters. Same with *Space Jam*, *Quest for Camelot*, *Ferngully* and many other feature toons. In 1995, a little less than two years before release, Turner's booth at the annual licensing show in New York had not a single scrap of anything for *CDD*. They wouldn't even talk about it. A year later Turner's booth had a huge display for the never-to-be-made *Jetsons* live action feature. *CDD* was just an afterthought. It was merely there with all the rest of the stuff.

The original plan was that Warner's was going to release the project and Turner was going to promote it.

Then came the merger. Most of Turner's properties were absorbed into

Time-Warner Inc, and WB was too busy promoting the *Space Jam* video.

CDD was, pound for pound, the worst-promoted major motion picture of the decade and lost almost \$35 million.

Why? The movie didn't suck. Sure, it was out of its time. Old fashioned musicals are old fashioned. The story of Danny the Cat is a slightly PC update of *Singing in the Rain* or *42nd Street*. The animation is equal to that of Disney's. The palette of color is very pleasing to the eye and the villain, Darla Dimple, was taken from the long-running off Broadway hit *Ruthless* and is really hilarious. The joy in the making of the film shows through in every frame. It is, in fact, better than *Pocahontas*, and *Hercules* as a movie and is damn close to *Hunchback of Notre Dame* in sheer technical brilliance.

The *LA Times* had an article in the spring about toons and name brand recognition. Warner's showed Don Bluth's *Thumbalina* with the Disney logo to some test audiences and without to others. The "Disney" version got a much better reaction.

Looney Toons is a brand name. Beavis and Butthead is a brand name. People will go to see brand names even if they suck. Look at *Batman and Robin*, *Godfather III* or *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*.

CDD could have had a brand name, but the Cartoon Network brand was withheld for some reason.

Okay. No brand name. The trailer stank. No promotion to speak of, and worst of all...matinee only (noon to three) in most major theaters for most of its first run. We're talking from the middle of the first week here. Of course the damn thing tanked!

As for the video, it was supposed to be in video stores today. I checked, and I didn't see it. I didn't see any posters either. "Balto" had a POP display weeks before it came out. *Space Jam* had a poster on One Times Square, for crying out loud! Diane Cornbluth, whose little p.r. firm is promoting the thing was thrilled someone called her about this. Warner Home Video has a first rate publicity department, and animated films with good reviews can make far more on video than at the box office. That they were too lazy to bother with it is shocking. 'Toons on video is a profitable business. Rent it, you'll have a good time.



I MARRIED A STRANGE PERSON

Five years ago, Bill Plympton finished a feature cartoon called *The Tune*. It was a G-rated musical that was released by October films into a dozen or so theaters before going to video. He never saw a cent more than he was originally paid when the deal was closed.

Now, he's back again with *I Married a Strange Person*. This is also a musical, but it's not G-rated. If the people at the ratings board get their hands on it, it'll probably get an R, or if they really object to the sex scene, NC-17. Yes folks, this is the smuttiest American feature length 'toon since *Tarzoan: Shame of the Jungle* back in 1977 (or was it '79).

But it's not ALL sex....

It begins with two birds having sex in midair to the tune of a military march, being thus distracted, they crash into the satellite dish of one Grant Boyer, freelance accountant. This causes secret rays to zap our hero in the back of his neck, causing a growth there which turns him into a super-hero. Unfortunately, he just wants to remain a happily married accountant, as does his wife Kelly, who freaks out and calls her parents to complain.

Next week Grant and Kelly visit his inlaws, who hate him. So he gets his revenge and a very Plymptonesque manner. THEN comes the sex scene.

After that the film changes gears and turns into an action adventure film. This is also graphic. Grass seeks revenge on a neighbor, who likes to torture his lawn by keeping it well manicured. Comedian Jackie Jason juggles his body parts on TV, totally gross. Then of course, Plympton is the master of the gross-out.

Larson Giles, the evil head of the

Smilecorps Network, has discovered the source of our hero's power, and sends his army (imagine NBC nuking Fox) out to get poor Grant, who becomes a fugitive...it really has to be seen to be believed.

PIPPY LONGSTOCKINGS

Cowardice. That's what this year's crop of feature 'toons shows. Complete craven cowardice. Otherwise we wouldn't have three out of four of this year's theatrical features out on video already.

The first cowardly act wasn't by the animators or producers, *Cats Don't Dance* is a marvelous work. It was the promotion department at Warner's that wimped out. It's an odd film for these times, so they just let it die. (They also haven't done much to promote the video, which you should at least rent....)

The other two are completely the animator's fault. Rich Entertainment's *Swan Princess II* and Nelvana's *Pippi Longstockings* are terrible. They were made because it was allegedly the safe thing to do, and were given limited release in a few theaters to garner a few reviews, one which might give a quote or two for the back of the video box.

Nelvana, the most mercenary of animation studios, did have some courage once. They were working on Clive Barker's *The Thief of Always*, a project that promised all sorts of possibilities. Apparently it may have been a little too courageous because when they showed the leica reel to the suits at the Kennedy-Marshall company, they got fired on the spot. So when ABSVensk Filmindustri came with the proposal of doing an animated version of Astrid Lindgren's insipid-but-popular se-

ries, Nelvana jumped.

The damn thing looks and feels like one of those Disney knockoffs. The character design is bad Saturday morning, the music third-rate; (director Clive Smith convinced ABSF to make it a musical because the presskit says 'was necessary for the film to appeal to Canadian and American audiences') the songs are below par.

The plot (Smith, the press kit says, also convinced ABSF that movies should have plots too!!!) When Pippi's father Efram, the pirate, is washed overboard during a storm, Pippi is sent home to the most boring village in all Scandinavia. The grown ups hate her and really dumb thieves try unsuccessfully to steal her gold. The evil Mrs. Prsselius tries to get her sent to an orphanage. (what's so evil about that? I haven't a clue).

Of course I'm a grown-up. But the two kids in the audience didn't even chuckle. One, I think, fell asleep.

Cowardice produces predictable doodie.

Cowardice produces sequels when original projects languish in filing cabinets....

Swan Princess II was so bad I walked out. The only thing nice you can say about this mess is that the design is in keeping with the original.

It's a year after the wedding, and Prince Derek is off to destroy something called the forbidden arts. For some reason that's not made clear (okay maybe it is. I walked out). Princess Odette is locked in a dungeon by Jack Pallance's more evil brother, who looks like Gandalf on a bad day. She is rescued by her animal friends from last episode, as well as her nanny, who sounds like the incredible Hulk. You can tell that the writers really didn't want to do this project ("oh great, another dungeon" Jean-Bob the frog says, clearly speaking for the staff).

Odette finds the forbidden arts, steals it and when captured by mistake, ("I am so stupid", Jean-Bob says while accidentally shutting the prison door behind him) and uses it to turn back into a swan and save Derrek. At this point I walked out. If the people, who're making the damn thing show a transparent contempt for a project, why shouldn't anyone else?

(Continued on page 64)

There's No Need to Fear, Hungerthon is Here!

Hey, wait a second, what is "Hungerthon"?

Answer: (please pick one)

- A. World Hunger Year's annual radio marathon the weekend before Thanksgiving heard on 102.7 FM WNEW throughout the New York tri-state area.
- B. A great opportunity to learn about hunger and poverty, and what is being done to help individuals and communities develop greater self-reliance.
- C. An easy way to help World Hunger Year continue its valuable work through donations and on-air auctions of premium items such as guitars & CDs signed by rock stars, and sports memorabilia.
- D. A chance to get a really cool t-shirt, sweatshirt or limited edition lithograph featuring everyone's favorite spokes-mutt, **Underdog**, that has been designed by the original animator Joe Harris (check out the inside front cover of this issue of Animato! Magazine to see Joe's special design).
- E. All of the above.

If you chose "E" then you are correct.



UNDERDOG TM & ©1997 GBPC, a subsidiary of Golden Books Family Entertainment.

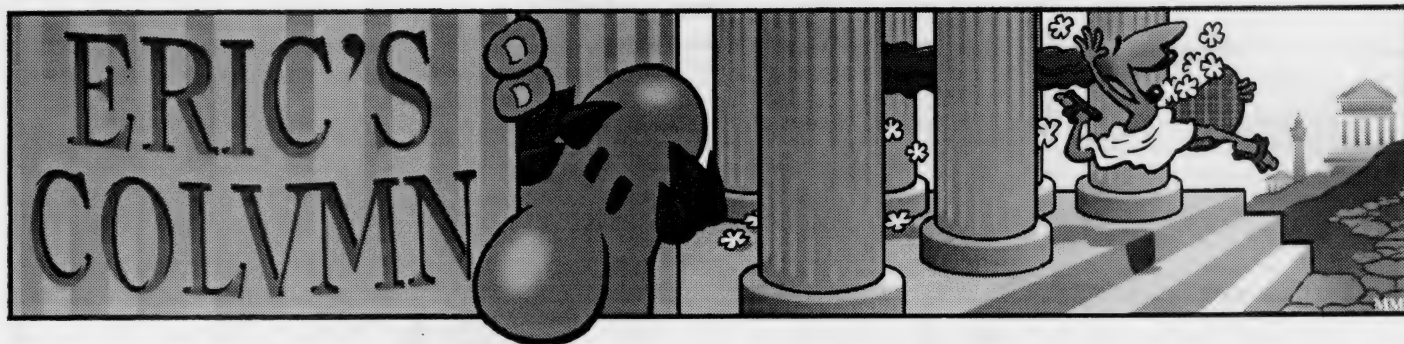
Tune in to Hungerthon on 102.7 FM WNEW on Nov. 16 from 8 pm to 2 am, and also from November 22-23 for your chance to be a part of this important educational and fundraising event.



If you can't wait until then, or if you live outside of the tri-state area, call World Hunger Year at 1-800-5-HUNGRY.

If you really can't wait, check us out on the web at:
<<http://www.iglou.com/why/hungerthon>>.

Hungerthon is made possible by the generous support of
102.7 FM WNEW, Golden Books, AS Goldmen, Boar's Head and Microsoft



Ration for the Duration

by Eric O. Costello

One of the truly remarkable things about the animated short subjects produced by the Hollywood studios in the thirties, forties and fifties is their sheer durability. Thanks to video and outlets like the Cartoon Network, one can still enjoy cartoons made forty, fifty, and even sixty years ago.

Of course, this is not to say that time has stood still for these cartoons. Many were products of their time, and reflect then-current influences in entertainment and current events. Catch-phrases and references that would have been caught immediately by audiences when the cartoons were made are, to a certain extent, lost by viewers today.

This column is about animation history in a certain respect; it will look at cartoons made decades ago and will unravel or otherwise explain various historical and/or cultural references that might be obscure today. The goal of this column is to attempt to put you, the 1990s viewer, in roughly the same position as the viewer of these cartoons when they were brand-new.

The examples I will use are largely taken from Warner Bros. and MGM cartoons. In large measure, this is because these cartoons have a wide distribution through video and television, and thus are easily accessible. This is not to say, of course, that the products of Lantz, Fleischer, Famous, Disney, Screen Gems and others

lacked these references, merely that the WB and MGM examples can be found with relative ease.

To start off the column, I will continue the World War II theme carried over from the last issue, and examine rationing. (World War II is a theme that I will touch on quite a bit, partly because it was such an important topic during the height

subject to more regulations and shortages than at any time, before or since. Jokes about these shortages and the rationing programs would have been easily recognized, and were a source of comic relief for those worried about loved ones serving abroad.

One could break the rationing schemes into two different general categories; automobile-related rationing, and food-related rationing.

Not-So-Merry Oldsmobile.

Considering that in 1940, the United States produced 1.35 billion of the world's production of 2.14 billion barrels of crude oil, one would wonder why there would be acute shortages of gasoline, even with the demands of war. (The Middle East, at this time, supplied less than 6% of the world's crude oil production.) The answer, in part, lies in how petroleum products were shipped. Prior to World War II, the bulk of the oil produced in Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana, the number 1,

3 and 5 states in oil production, was shipped to the east coast in tankers that plied the Gulf of Mexico and the East Coast. 95% of the petroleum needs of the East Coast was supplied by these tankers. When war with Germany broke out in December, 1941, German U-Boats for the first time were able to operate off the East Coast. Aided by foolish practices, such as the refusal by the city of Miami to implement blackout conditions, the U-Boats took a heavy toll on shipping; nine tankers were sunk in just two weeks in January, 1942. This caused



Judy Canova promotes rubber conservation.

of the industry's powers in the forties, and partly because the war-related items are so dated that many items slip through the cracks.)

Rationing of goods was all-pervasive during the Second World War, and for a duration and extent that was greater than a generation before, in the First World War. Because of the global nature of the conflict, the enormous demands related thereto, and the loss of certain key resources, such as natural rubber (as noted below), civilians in the United States were

serious shortages of petroleum products on the East Coast, for there was no other way to get these products to the East Coast. In 1942, the government funded a project undertaken by major oil companies to build the Big Inch pipeline, a 24 inch diameter pipeline capable of moving 335,000 barrels of oil per day from the Southwest to the East. (A further 20-inch pipeline, Little Big Inch, was completed in March, 1944, and was capable of moving 235,000 barrels per day.)

Thus, it was the East Coast that felt the first shortages of gasoline. On May 15, 1942, gas rationing was imposed in seventeen Eastern states, and a nationwide speed limit of forty miles per hour was imposed (this is the Keep It Under Forty program referenced at the end of *The Daffy Duckeroo* (WB, McCabe, 1942) by the Indian riding the putt-putt).

The speed limit was imposed because of another key shortage, that of rubber. Most of the natural rubber consumed in the United States came from abroad, from the Far East, particularly present-day Malaysia, which supplied 60% of the American requirements of rubber (as well as 75% of the tin requirements). Malaysia was one of the first areas to fall under Japanese domination in the early part of 1942, cutting off this major source of natural resources for the war effort just when it was needed the most. While various oil companies had undertaken research into synthetic rubber during the 1930s (even to the extent of cooperating with the notorious German firm of I.G. Farben, later implicated in slave-labor production of this rubber at death camps), synthetic rubber production (like the factory seen in *The Weakly Reporter* (WB, Jones, 1944)) would not be fully implemented until later in the war. Scrap rubber drives (as well as scrap metal drives) of the type spoofed in *Scrap Happy Daffy* (WB, Tashlin, 1943) were only able to partially fill the nation's needs. Many people probably wished there was a goose that laid aluminum, not golden eggs, like those seen in *Foney Fables* (WB, Freleng, 1942).

The first months of rationing were a confused affair. Only some areas had gas

rationing, so that if one lived on the fringes of a rationed area, one was subject to the basic three gallon allotment, while nearby folk could drive to their heart's content. Another scandal erupted when it was found that X-cards, permitting unlimited gas for allegedly essential uses, were issued to over 200 members of Congress. It was believed that without further steps, the number of road-worthy cars might decline from over 29 million to just 1 million by the end of 1944, a level not seen since 1913, putting an interesting spin on the gag in "The Weakly Reporter" with the car being startled by the sight of a horse.

Finally, in December, 1942, nationwide gas rationing and tire rationing was put into effect. A card system was created that rationed gas owing to different needs (the "A" and "C" cards flashed by

lons a week (the levels fluctuated somewhat during the war) was the "A" card, which every owner got. Obviously, the ration could easily run out, which is the whole point of the closing gag in *Falling Hare* (WB, Clampett, 1943); the runaway plane carrying the Gremlin and Bugs sputters to a stop just before crashing, the Gremlin noting that they ran out of gas, and Bugs observing that "you know how it is with these "A" cards." If you could convince your local rationing board that you had a greater need for gas, you could get a "B" ration (if you had further to drive that most drivers) or a "C" ration, which was restricted to those whose work had a relation to the war effort or public welfare, such as doctors and war-plant workers. Hence the joke in *Russian Rhapsody* (WB, Clampett, 1944), in which a Russkie Gremlin changes the ration sticker on the window of Hitler's plane from "C" to "a" (the lower case letter being a typical example of Clampett whimsy). Police, volunteer fireman, and civil defense workers were allotted unlimited supplies.

Connected with this rationing program was a tire-inspection program whose web

of regulations had to be followed to the letter, if you wanted to get a new or re-capped tire. Thus, tire hoarding of the type seen in *Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs* (WB, Clampett, 1943) and in the garage belonging to Porky and Daffy in *Tick Tock Tuckered* (WB, Clampett, 1944) was strictly prohibited. Tires thus became a rare item (the remark that "the tires in this photoplay are fictitious" in *The Blitz Wolf* (MGM, Avery, 1942), and the gag of the ambulance crew rescuing the tire and not an injured motorist in *The Weakly Reporter* were thus not all that far off the mark).

While there were significant cases of cheating, such as gas coupon counterfeiting and theft (not unlike Woody



Coupons, coupons, coupons!

Bugs in *Tortoise Wins By a Hare* (WB, Clampett, 1943) are examples); one went to one's local ration board, composed of one's neighbors (who would, presumably, know your true need for gas), and was issued lettered windshield stickers (like those shown in many cartoons; the example of the motorist in *The Weakly Reporter* with so many that he has to use a periscope is a humorous exaggeration) and gas coupon books. At the gas pump, the attendant would remove the appropriate number of coupons, on which the car's license plate number had to be written. Coupons were valid for only a specified period, to prevent saving up for a rainy day.

The basic gas ration of four gal-

Woodpecker's activities in *Ration Bored* (Lantz, Hawkins/Schaffer, 1943)), the remarkable thing was that the gas rationing was largely borne, if not completely cheerfully, at least patriotically. When pressed with the question of "Is This Trip Really Necessary?" or variation thereof (like that posed in *Draftee Daffy* (WB, Clampett, 1945), *Wagon Heels* (WB, Clampett, 1945), *Nasty Quacks* (WB, Tashlin, 1945), the citizenry, like Bugs at the end of *The Unruly Hare* (WB, Tashlin, 1945), dusted themselves off and obeyed, and waited until the end of gas rationing, which came on August 15, 1945. The system of gas rationing is virtually unique in American history as an example of widespread government regulation that dramatically affected the American standard of living being obeyed and implemented largely by citizens themselves.

Food, Glorious Food

The other major area of rationing that would have affected the home front during the war would have been food rationing. Some items that came from abroad, and thus took up badly needed shipping space, were seriously curtailed and rationed, such as coffee (rationed from November 1942 to July 1943) and sugar (rationed as late as June, 1947), though whether the coffee shortage induced the kind of wild sleepless nights seen in *The Weekly Reporter* is another question. Other items were rationed, in part to supply soldiers and sailors abroad, and in part to prevent inflationary pressures of citizens with lots of money chasing small supplies of key foods. (30% of the nation's butter production was reserved for the armed forces, mostly for the toast and pancakes consumed by soldiers and sailors, and about the same level of national cheese production went to the military and Allied countries.) About one-third of civilian food items were rationed during most of the war. (Along with such other items as cigarettes, which is noted in *Jerky Turkey* (MGM, Avery, 1945) — Lucky Strike Green really did go to war in more than one sense.)

This, of course, led to a long series of gags regarding certain food commodities. Villains were seen hoarding or stealing food, such as Queenie in *Coal*

Black, Mother Hubbard with a not-so-bare cupboard in *Foney Fables*, the giant in *Ration Fer the Duration* (Famous, Kneitel, 1943), and Bugs Bunny robbing the 5:15 in *Buckaroo Bugs* (WB, Clampett, 1944) and making off with a hoard of rationed food items. Butter was joked about as an item so precious it had to be delivered by armored car, as in *The Weekly Reporter*.

But without question, it was the rationing of meat that came in for the most jokes. A nameless dog, frustrated by a lack of meat in his diet, throws a complete fit in *Behind the Meatball* (WB, Tashlin, 1945),



One of many video tapes available with a World War II theme.

pausing briefly to ask "You've had this feeling before, haven't you folks?" before hallucinating cuts of meat in tennis racquets and the like. The hapless, starving wolf in *I Got Plenty of Mutton* (WB, Tashlin, 1944) reads that the OPA [Office of Price Administration, which administered gas, tire and food rationing during the war] had denied meat to wolves, Hollywood or otherwise. The frantic buzzards in *What's Buzzin', Buzzard?* (MGM, Avery, 1943) seek meat to such an extent that cannibalism is an option (with Avery tempting the audience with shots of a nice juicy steak), and Avery has an Indian seek meat for a hungry tribe in *Big Heel-watha* (MGM, Avery, 1944). Chuck Jones, in *The Weekly Reporter*,

imagined a femme fatale getting meat out of a butcher through, ahem, feminine wiles, and people paying just to smell meat.

The OPA rationed food through rationing stamps which, like the gas boards, were administered through local, volunteer-staffed rationing boards. These are the books like those seen in *Big Heel-Watha* (the one that Screwly Squirrel tears up) and in *From Hand to Mouse* (WB, Jones, 1944). Registration began in April of 1942. One member of a household handled the registering, which included stating supplies on hand, in an effort to combat hoarding. Each member of the family got a book (though children under fifteen did not get coffee stamps). Grocery shoppers spent red stamps for meat (except for poultry, which was never rationed during the war), butter, fats, cheese canned milk and canned fish. Green, brown or blue stamps were used for canned vegetables, juices, baby food and dried fruits. A shopper could earn two extra red points for every pound of meat drippings and other fats turned in as part of a campaign to collect fats, which were used to produce paints, munitions, and other vital goods. (The Walt Disney studio produced a short starring Pluto that promoted this campaign.)

Each food item was assigned a set of points, which could fluctuate, so that if you looked at an item in a grocery store, price tags would show both the cents and points. For example, a pound of ham might cost 51 cents and 8 points. Similarly, restaurants were supposed to collect stamps as well. Thus the gags in *What's Buzzin' Buzzard?* with the jackrabbit having no points, in *Big Heel-Watha* with some animals having points (especially deer, whose antlers have yet more points, and excluding skunks, where no points were necessary), the 12-point mouse demanding to see the lion's ration book in *From Hand to Mouse* and in *An Itch in Time*, (WB, Clampett, 1943) where the flea tears off a ration stamp just before biting into Fudd's dog, and carries off a no-points blue plate special with Fudd and the dog at the end of the cartoon. The system could be perplexing, so much so that the OPA commissioned Leon Schlesinger, the producer of WB cartoons until 1944, to make a public-service cartoon, *Point Rationing of Foods*, which was produced by

Chuck Jones' unit and released in February, 1943, and was widely praised for its ability to get the message across.

Meatless Tuesdays of the type that frustrates the spider in *Meatless Flyday* (WB, Freleng, 1944), that is sung about by the flea in *An Itch in Time* and that forms the basis for *Meatless Tuesday* (Lantz, Culhane, 1943) were one method of coping with the meat shortage, by reducing consumption voluntarily.

As in World War I, many people tried to meet the shortages by planting Victory Gardens, of the type seen or referred to in *A Tale of Two Kitties* (WB, Clampett, 1942), *Jack Wabbit and the Beanstalk* (WB, Freleng, 1943), *Buckaroo Bugs*, *Ration Fer the Duration* (well, sort

of — many probably wished they had a garden that would grow rubber items) or *Barney Bear's Victory Garden* (MGM, Ising, 1942). As with gasoline, some people tried to cheat through the black market, a concept spoofed by Avery in both *Jerky Turkey* and *Big Heel-watha*, but again, the surprising fact is that the American public endured the rationing without too many objections, perhaps in part because they were aware of the enormous food shortages in Allied countries that the US tried to alleviate by sending food abroad, a concept noted in *The Swooner Crooner* (WB, Tashlin, 1944) and *Spinach Fer Britain* (Famous, Sparber, 1943); indeed, food rationing would not completely end in the UK until July of 1954, after 14 1/2 years.

A Few Words From Our Sponsor

Aside from the proprietors of this fine magazine, who have generously allotted me this space, I'd also like to thank Steve Worth of Vintage Ink and Paint and Mark LoPresti for providing me with certain reference materials.

I cheerfully accept suggestions for topics for future columns, and even more cheerfully accept corrections; good history demands accuracy. You can email me at EOCostello@aol.com, or drop a line at alt.animation.warner-bros, where I hang out quite frequently.

--Eric O. Costello



Distribution and Publishing

We can't argue with Stefan Kanfer's quote on page 234 of *Serious Business*: "*Animato!*, best of the many magazines devoted to the art, barely has space to include the manifold activities and personalities in its thick quarterly issues." This summer we were pleasantly surprised by a flood of submissions to ANiMATO!, ballooning #38 to eighty-eight pages and forcing some excellent pieces had to be diverted to future issues.

Besides #38 being our largest issue ever, it's also a publishing milestone for ANiMATO! with a print run of more than three times that of baptismal issue #23. (This is largely due to one distributor doubling their standing order and new foreign markets. You can now find ANiMATO! in Hong Kong and Bombay.)

Speaking of distributors, I'd like to take a moment to thank Jeff Evans of Diamond for finding and returning unsold copies of issue #36. This summer we didn't have enough inventory to offer #36 as a back issue, so Jeff contacted outlets in

Diamond's network and shipped two boxes directly to us during the UPS strike.

Writers and Artists

We are planning a massive amount of exciting columns and articles for future issues: David Gerstein will be examining early Mickey Mouse shorts in his column *Views From the Mousehole*. Prolific David Krell will be doing a regular column in addition to his excellent pieces on *Mask of the Phantasm*, *Cool McCool*, *Archie* and '60s *Saturday Morning* articles. Gord Wilson has already filed two articles: One on Jacques Rupp and an interview with Paul Harrod of the Will Vinton Studios.

Canadian Chris Robinson will be checking in with his up-front style in one of a dozen proposed articles! Fellow Canuck Stephen Cooke returns to continue his column *Neighbors: Notes from the North*. Mike Lyons is "de-bugging" *Starship Troopers* animator Phil Tippett. Mike Ventrella returns to cover Ron Clements and John Musker. Judy Reboy has filed two more articles, including a look at *Rocket Robin Hood* for our "Saturday Morning Special" issue. We are planning to celebrate the anniversaries of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *Yellow Submarine*. John Beam, is working as an associate editor on an Osamu Tezuka retrospective with articles and input by Japanese historians.

Sadly, *McBoing Boing's The Journal of Drawings in Motion* will be put to sleep after issue #12. Luckily, for ANiMATO! readers, *McBoing Boing's*

Dewey McGuire and John Hayes will bring their style and wit to these humble pages with a monster article on Arthur Davis, dove-tailing nicely with Glen Anton's interviews with Bob Givens, Pete Alvarado and Willie Ito.

Oil Can Harry McCracken's *Theme Park* reprise is being illustrated by Brian Buniak, Gary Fields, Pete Fitzgerald, Mark Martin, John Occhiuto, Jay Rath and Jim Siergey. *Magnificent Seven* or *The Wild Bunch*? You be the judge.

John Province has a special piece on Al Eugster. A few surprise authors are waiting in the wings.

Staff Notes

We'd like to welcome copy editor Joan Long. A graduate of Brigham Young University, Joan sez: "I can't wait to slash entire paragraphs!" Seriously, Joan is a talented copy editor and we are thrilled to have her on staff.

Allowing for our small staff and upgrading to new computers and equipment, a realistic goal for publishing in 1998 would be three issues. Should upgrading prove to be smoother than expected, we will naturally squeeze out a fourth issue.

You can expect the ANiMATO! staff and Underdog creator, Joe Harris to be in New York City for the **Hungerthon** kick off at Animazing Gallery on Sunday, November 16th. Stop by and say hello to Patrick and Sheila, and illustrator Ray Dorow and his wife, Paula.

ARTHUR and AURORA

An Archetypal Analysis of Walt Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*

by Beth Thomas

Disney animators have almost always seemed to have a secret recipe for success. But who ever would have thought that, like the Holy Grail, the secret might be hidden in the classic literature of the middle ages?

The most influential of all English literature, the first book written in what is now considered to be modern English, was Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. His fifteenth century tales of the conquests of the Knights of the Round Table and the exploits of King Arthur and Excalibur made history readable and exciting, if a bit fanciful. For centuries the Arthurian legends have been copied and modified by the Europeans, rewritten by Tennyson in the Victorian style *Idylls of the King*, and modernized again by T.H. White in *The Once and Future King*. Yet all these versions of Malory's medieval romance follow strictures as constraining as the code of chivalry.

A medieval romance is a whirlwind of action. Tales are set in an atmosphere of magic and make-believe, and populated with handsome knights, brave kings, beautiful maidens, and cruel captors. Knights pursue high adventure in the form of a religious crusade, a conquest for their liege, and perhaps the rescue of a lady in distress. In order to truly qualify, a medieval romance must have seven elements:

- 1—A Superhuman Hero-Knight
- 2—Supernatural Forces
- 3—Pitting of Good vs. Evil Forces
- 4—A Disguised Identity
- 5—An Imaginary or Vague Setting
- 6—Idealized Love for the Lady
- 7—Idealized Chivalry

The most logical choice for Disney's best use of this formula seems to be the story of Arthur himself in *The Sword and the Stone*, but critics agree that the film did not measure up to some of the earlier classics. The perfect medieval romance was written almost exactly five hundred

years after Malory's prototype.

Sleeping Beauty has a superhuman hero named Prince Phillip, an evil enchantress, love at first sight, the prince,

In the very first scene, the long-awaited arrival of the only heir, Aurora, correlates concisely with Arthur's arrival which was predicted by Merlin. The simi-



princess, even fairies in disguise, and the happily-ever-after ending too. But the magic of Disney lies in the archetypes of *Sleeping Beauty* evoking the magnetic mysticism of Camelot and Knights of the Round Table.

larity of their names is compounded by their similar childhoods. To protect the infants, the supernatural forces of goodness, Flora, Fauna, Merryweather, and Merlin foster them in the depths of the forest until they come of age and can safely

return to the realm to reclaim their thrones.

The forces of evil are personified by two fiendish females whose names even suggest malevolence. Maleficent and Morgana, with their raven familiars, vow to destroy the heirs to satisfy vengeance. With similar black costumes, the antagonists represent the dark side of human nature as well as the dark side of the natural world, juxtaposed with the symbolism of Merlin and the names of good fairies, Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather. At one point, Maleficent's henchmen dance in concentric circles by the light of the moon to celebrate their own deeds. The visual effect of the dance suggests a satanic ritual and links Maleficent to Morgana in one more way. Morgana is often referred to as Morgan Le Fay, meaning Morgan of the fairies, with the connotation of evil woodland spirits implied.

The element of disguise is artfully employed in several places. The fairies are disguised as peasants in order to raise the princess in anonymity just as Merlin did in delivering Arthur to Sir Ector's home. Briar Rose and Wart, the disguise names of the heroine and hero of the respective features, both have a rather repulsive quality that enhances the disguise. Likewise, Prince Phillip's riding habit makes him appear to be a parody of Robin Hood more than a prince on an outing. To the trained eye however, the regal bearing, the obvious breeding and even Prince Phillip's white horse, Samson, all announce royalty.

The idea of a familiar for the antagonist is translated into an aide for the protagonists as well. Briar Rose has a special affinity for the owl, who stands in for the prince in the "Once Upon a Dream" dance. Wart is trained in the art of flight by Archimedes the owl, his adviser and Merlin's familiar. And Phillip has Samson, the white stallion with the name symbolic of strength, a necessary mode of transportation for a royal wedding.

The typically vague setting of somewhere long ago and far away is even mirrored in the castle. Disney's trademark castle is the only manifestation regal enough

for the royal couple, a symbolic Camelot. The turreted castle perched on the precipice of the ocean is reminiscent of the real location of Tintagel, Arthur's birthplace, and is a fitting location for the final stand-off between hero-knight and villain, complete with thunder, lightning and dragon.

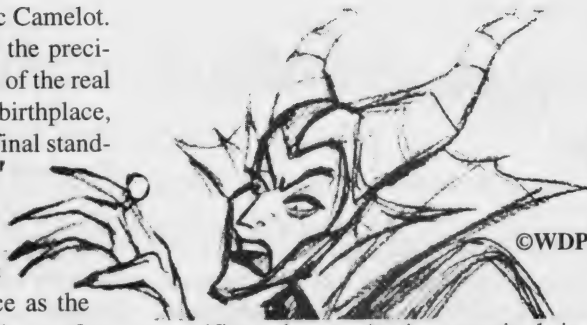
Once Upon a Dream takes on additional significance as the primary song, because it is the perfect accompaniment for the couple's love at first sight. In the Arthurian legends, Arthur falls in love with Guinevere instantly too, as was foretold



Merlin and Arthur drawings by Aubrey Beardsley from *Morte D'Arthur*

by Merlin, aided by a prophetic dream. Though the heroes are both warned of the imminent danger involved in the choice, the men vow to go to any extreme to attain the lady's love.

The true chivalry of the hero is seen in his steadfast resolve to regain control of the castle, and though Arthur never physically faces a dragon, the image of Arthur Pendragon wresting Camelot and Guinevere from the clutches of Mordred is visually accomplished in *Sleeping Beauty*. Prince Phillip hacks his way through the sentinel thorns to face Maleficent. In an eerie transformation, she mutates into a



magnificent dragon. Against seemingly insurmountable odds, Phillip shields himself from the flames and fury until the dragon's flaming breath blows the shield out of his hands. Now defenseless, Phillip's last effort is to throw the sword into the breast of the dragon. His direct hit to Maleficent's heart sends the beast off the cliff to dissolve into the rocks below. When he peers over the edge he sees only the sword standing straight in solid rock. The sword in the stone is Phillip's signal of success and the archetypal assurance of his status as a true heir to the Arthurian legend.

A new king has come and the sword has risen. A kiss awakens his love and the kingdom stirs to greet the heirs as Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather bring color and life to the flowers and friends. The fathers, Hubert and Stephan rejoice in their combined success and the future of the kingdom seems safe as the prince and princess parade from the parapet to the palace floor for their first dance.

Whether by fairy dust or mystic recipe *Sleeping Beauty* has its roots in the magic of Merlin, the captivation of Camelot and the prophecy of the once and future king.



Beth Thomas is a teacher at the Victor High School (NY) where she often uses animation as a learning tool. Beth is also an active member of APAtoons.

"That's all Folks!"

(Continued from page 14)

Neither *Father's Day* nor *Murder at 1600* broke the \$30 million mark in domestic theaters. Of the upcoming productions, Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* looks to be the only sure-fire hit. The Uma Thurman vehicle, *The Avengers*, has some people worrying. The Kevin Costner Sci-Fi film, *The Postman*, is almost destined to be a big-time dud.

Why is it that, without blinking an eye, Warner Brothers can throw over \$50 million into the production and marketing of *Father's Day* or drop a couple of million dollars on a flashy *Batman and Robin* premiere party, yet not find \$5 million a year for CJFP? With that much money, CJFP could release five to seven animated films in a year. Considering the recent studio merger, CJFP would have the classic Warner Brothers characters, the old MGM characters, and could even be developing several new characters. The potential returns through tv and videos would make the \$5 million investment a drop in the bucket.

Concluded the unnamed source, "They could have revitalized the Tex Avery style cartoons with the actual Tex Avery characters. Warner Brothers would have a lot of animation art to sell, and a great marketing tool with the classic characters as well as the ones that would have been created and evolved over time. They wouldn't make their money back in the first or second quarter, but it would definitely happen over a few years."

Instead, Warner Brothers makes another horrendous mistake and closes the door, for now, on CJFP. Meanwhile, Jeff Katzenburg is laughing and kicking up his heels, as he has signed the polished animators over to the production company on the rise, Dreamworks SKG. Warner Brothers did all the preliminaries in developing the staff and now Dreamworks will realize their talents and reap in the rewards.

--Glenn Anton

Glenn Anton is a regular contributor to ANiMATO! and has just completed a shooting script for *Satan A-Go-Go*

NEW YORK NOTES

(Continued from page 56)

When this thing was being made, Rich was touting *Feathertop* right here in this very magazine. When Morgan Creek came to him with their useless *King and I* remake, he dropped *Feathertop* like a hot potato. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. But for the money he spent on *Swan Princess II* and *III* (yes, there is a *III*) He could have made *Feathertop* and *The King and I*.

Goodtimes and Sony have made quite a bit of money on the direct to video market. Rich and Nelvana want to cash in too. Fine. But if you're going to do direct to video made for babies stuff, don't put it in actual big screen release. It's embarrassing.

MONDO PLYMPTON

Animated documentaries are rare as hen's teeth. There's a reason for this. It's damn hard to do. Bill Plympton makes an attempt with an autobiographical romp through his life and work. This is both a blessing and a curse.

The problem with this is unless you've never heard of the fellow, you've all ready seen much of the movie already. What's worse, he becomes repetitious. By the time it's over, you've seen some of the jokes several times. A throwaway in one short becomes the main theme of one several down the road. Now this is perfectly fine if you view the shorts, say several weeks apart from each other, but begins to grate on you when you see them all at once. It's like eating an entire chocolate cake. Too much is too much.

All of the bits are good and some of them, like the Oscar® nominated *Your Face* downright fantastic. Plympton's a master illustrator, and his semirealistic artwork, is a bizarre contrast to the Clampett-esque slapstick of the action. Truly weird and wonderful.

If you've got *Plymptoons* and *The Tune* there's no reason to see this at all, despite the new footage. If you haven't then give it a try. Just don't OD.

--Eric Lurio

ア = へ

(Anime Reviews from page 53)

Guld's YF-19 fighter.

Myung, who once enjoyed a professional singing career, is now the "manager" for an artificial intelligence performer named Sharon Apple. However, the system running Sharon is being rigged by people who envision "her" as more than entertainment for the masses, and eventually, Guld and Isamu put aside their petty differences, and join forces to stop Sharon from confiscating the giant Macross craft itself. For the most part, this tale is a sordid soap opera-like love triangle between the principle characters. I think the story gets rather muddled with the plot, but the real reason to get *Macross Plus the Movie* is the outstanding action sequences. While this is termed a "movie", it is for the most part a pieced together four-part series, but the animation is feature quality. In fact, the aerial sequences are some of the most exciting pieces of animation I've ever seen.

By far, *Macross Plus the Movie* is the best single entity of the entire series as far as the animation is concerned. It also stands well with the Macross saga in the story department. Animation Director Yuji Moriyama has been a personal favorite of mine ever since I first "discovered" Japanese-language anime in one of his great successes *Project A-ko* (1986), and shows in this film that he has grown considerably in sophistication. If I have any complaints, it is that Sharon Apple isn't the greatest villain I've ever seen. I enjoyed things a lot more when humanity was on the verge of extermination by the hand of the Zentraedi instead of a power-hungry computer trying to brainwash everyone, but this is one occasion where I give action and excitement the upper-hand over plot. I would even recommend it to owners of the four-part *Macross Plus* series.

--John Beam



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Forbidden Animation

Censored Cartoons and Blacklisted Animators in America

Karl F. Cohen Available October, 1997

How the risqué gags in pre-code cartoons were replaced by the rigid standards of the Hays Office is the first misadventure covered in this history of censorship in animation. The perpetuation of racial stereotypes in many early cartoons is examined, as are the pressures on studios to stop producing such animation. The censorship of television cartoons is studied along with the social controls that limit what is shown in schools and theatres today. The final chapter discusses the studio strikes and the animators who were blacklisted from the industry in the 1950s for alleged sympathies with the Communist Party.

Karl F. Cohen teaches animation history at San Francisco State University and is a frequent contributor to *ANiMATO!*

"Karl Cohen's *Forbidden Animation* authoritatively leads the reader through a historical minefield of toontown racism, Red-baiting and risqué gags." John Canemaker

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YOUNG READERS' PAGE!

All Reviews by Jamie Bourque
Age 13



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Peter and The Wolf

Hi, my name is Jamie and I am here working with the staff of ANiMATO! to bring you movie reviews from a kid's point of view.

This movie is a Disney Favorite Story called *Peter and the Wolf*.

This magical musical was brought to life by Disney's amazing animation skills. In some Disney movies music plays a central part in the plot. This movie proves just that. Each character is represented by a musical instrument. For instance, Ivan the cat is represented by a clarinet. Everytime Ivan was shown, a clarinet would be playing in the background. The same went for each character in the story. The music in the story comes from a Symphony.

The story takes place in Russia

during a cold, snowy winter.

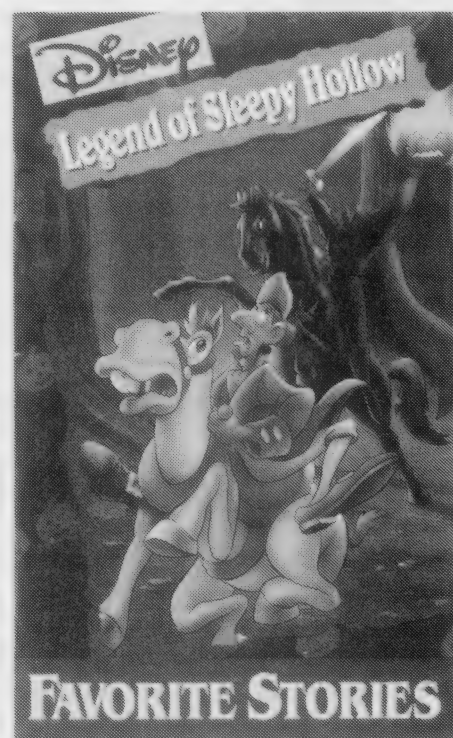
The main character is a young boy of five or six named Peter. Peter is determined to disobey his grandfather's orders and go out into the dark woods hunting for the wolf. Now do you remember when you were that age and how brave you were? Even the Boogie Man didn't scare you! So you understand how courageous he is. Peter is armed only with his pop-gun and his three brave friends at his side. They are a bird, a duck and a cat. What an unusual sight to see parading through the dark woods!

Once they find the wolf, what happens is incredible! How can a young boy, a duck, a bird and a cat capture a wolf? Watch the movie to find out what happens to this courageous group.

I enjoyed this movie. On a scale of one to ten, I would give it a seven. I chose this for many reasons. One is because of the characters. They made me laugh time and again. Another is because of the animation. The color was clear and bright. One thing about the movie that I didn't care for was the fact that the characters didn't have voices of their own. There was a narrator to tell the story. The music told the story. When something bad would happen the music was dark and scary. This movie would be a favorite of someone who loves classical music. The animation is blended with the musical sound effects to tell a touching story of a seemingly impossible dream. Young children should find this tale appealing because the star is a young boy and his friends are animals.

So whether you want to see a movie that has musical appeal or see a movie that shows the bravery of one small boy, *Peter and the Wolf* fits the bill.

Keep reading ANiMATO! for future reviews. I'll be here and I hope that you will too.



© 1997 Walt Disney

The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow

Hi, it's Jamie again bringing you yet another cartoon review.

I just watched a Disney Favorite Story called the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. This colorful classic is a great rendition of Washington Irving's tale the *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. It takes place in the mid-1800's near the Hudson River Valley in New York.

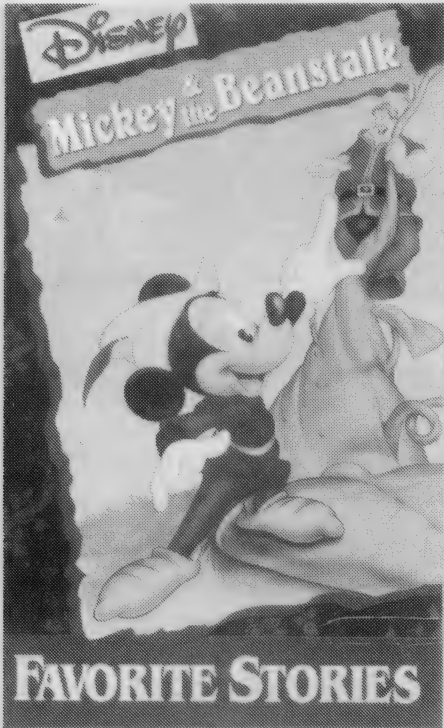
As with most Disney movies, music plays a central part in the story line. Of the three songs in this movie, two were cleverly created to introduce main characters.

We first meet Ichabod Crane a tall, lanky, self-confident, and self-centered school teacher. Despite his very odd appearance Ichabod possesses many talents. He decides to use these talents to win

the hand of fair Katrina. His rival, Brom Bones, is out maneuvered at every turn until the night of the Midnight Jamboree. That night when Brom Bones tells the story of the "Headless Horseman," Ichabod comes undone.

What happens next is unbelievable!! You'll have to see the movie to find out.

I liked this movie but found that



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some of the vocabulary would be very difficult for young children. Both the animation and the color are visually appealing.

Of the three main characters, Ichabod Crane stands out the most. He easily waltzes through life and everything seems to come his way. Even the handsome village bully, Brom Bones, can't shake Ichabod's confidence. The fair Katrina, a girl of great beauty but of little substance, is the catalyst in the plot. To his credit, Brom's character develops from an empty headed brute to a clever adversary in the battle for Katrina's hand.

If you like action, suspense and humor in a movie then this video is for you.

So next time you're in the video store be sure to check out the Disney Favorite Story: *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.



Jamie Bourque

Mickey and The Beanstalk

The story of Jack and the Beanstalk has been told over and over again. The Disney Favorite Story: *Mickey and the Beanstalk* gives us Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy as the heroic trio.

The story is set in Happy Valley where everyone prospers because of a magical, singing harp. After the harp is stolen the land of Happy Valley seems to shrivel up and die. Only then do we meet our three heroes, we find them in their shack as mere peasants surviving on the remains of a slice of bread and a bean. Mickey decides to sell his cow so the three can eat. Imagine Goofy and Donald's surprise when Mickey shows up with three magical beans instead of food.

The incredible adventures that follow are total entertainment. The background music produced by the singing harp depicted the overall mood of the scene. The harp's music was captivating and enjoyable.

The characters in the movie were realistic and believable. Donald was his usual short tempered self. Mickey seemed to be the balance between the two characters. Goofy seemed to have no idea about anything, (as usual).

Disney made some changes to the story from the original versions, which I thought worked very well.

In my opinion, the video was humorous and delightful. With this heroic trio, anything is possible. So if you want to laugh out loud then make a point to see this video.

The Prince and The Pauper

Imagine what it would be like to change places with your best friend, a complete stranger, or even the President of the United States.

In the Disney Favorite Story: *The Prince and the Pauper*, Mickey Mouse gets to do just that.

This adaptation of Mark Twain's



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classic tale is an animated story of a group of hilarious characters who try to save England from falling into the hands of an evil villain who has taken over the King's Castle.

Mickey Mouse stars in dual roles. Other wonderful performances are done by Donald Duck, Goofy and Pluto. Now can you imagine what can happen when these Disney stars team up? This unlikely group of heroes kept me laughing out loud.

I really liked this movie. The characters were humorous and well-animated (as always). It was fast paced and kept my interest from start to finish. Both the color and the animation were of great quality. I think this video would be a hit with children of all ages. If you're in the mood for a great flick that you want to enjoy over and over, then pick up *The Prince and the Pauper*. It's a definite two thumbs up.

--Jamie Bourque

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CHIP DUFFEY

GHOST WRITER
AT THE

CARTOON NETWORK

By Judith Reboy

to *Coast to Coast* episodes proudly announces that "Receipt of this letter means that you have been chosen as a finalist in the 'Date with Zorak' Sweepstakes." Another release describes Space Ghost as the "host of *Space Coast to Coast* and Intergalactic Off Award-winning examples, to see why Chip was join the *Coast to*

Because of the show's hybrid of perheroativepro-duc-probably staff of four room every scripts that ety

Because format, a strange talk show and su-cartoon, the cre-cess involved in ing the episodes is quite unique. "There's a writers who sit in a day and pour over come to us from a vari-of sources," says Chip. "Often times the script is from somebody in that room, but often it is not."

"That's our job," he explains, "To tweak scripts - To make them more in keeping with the characters and to make comedy, basically."

When a guest is booked, the writers compile a set of questions for Space Ghost to ask. However, thanks largely to the laws of physics, they have far more work - and freedom - than their competitors.

While Leno and Letterman talk to their guests in front of a live studio audi-

ence, the animated Space Ghost talks to them over a television monitor. The interviews are conducted in front of a dark backdrop from various locales, frequently the facilities of Cartoon Network's sister station, CNN.

The interviewees cannot see Space Ghost, or even the civilian identity of radio personality George Lowe. (According to press materials, during the first few episodes, guests saw a live action Space Ghost while talking to give them a frame of reference, but that idea was dropped due to rampant cases of the giggles.)

The tape comes to Cartoon Network headquarters usually the next day, and the writers then choose from available interviews in their library to complete a show.

Guests who have been chosen for the current season include Peter Fonda, Bill Mumy, Jimmy Cliff, Mark Hamill, Jack Logan, Fred Schneider of the B-52's, the band Pavement, Beck and Jon Stewart. Of special interest to longtime fans of the show, Erik Estrada of *Chips* will also appear. It has been a running gag throughout the show's run that Space Ghost's director/archenemy Moltar has been known to watch *Chips* reruns rather than the show in progress.

Although not yet scheduled, Chip says that the writers are looking forward to using recent interviews with Pat Boone, fresh from his controversial experiment with Christian heavy metal music, and veteran actor Charlton Heston.

"We haven't yet sat in the room, started with [just] two interviews and built a script from the ground up. I think we're going to try that, of course. We're halfway through the season and we're all working together really well now. I think it's something we could do now pretty efficiently, because sometimes by the time you finish a script you've basically rewritten it anyway. That's just how tortured these things are before they reach the air."

Unlike their live action counterparts, the writers have the opportunity, if not duty, to make their interviews more interesting. Chip says that he prefers to work from a tape and "basically distill it to the very best parts of the interview."

During this process, a guest's simple offhand remark may trigger some-

Space Ghost Coast to Coast, the Cartoon Network's delightfully screwball alternative to the other networks' more mundane gabfests, begins a new season of 26 episodes beginning July 18, 1997. This is the largest order for the series since its January, 1994 premiere.

To keep this finely tuned comedy instrument running smoothly, the Network has turned to within to bolster the show's writing staff. Chip Duffey, who has served Space Ghost and other "Top 'Toon Stars" in the Cartoon Network's Public Relations Department since 1993, left that position in October to become a Writer/Producer on *Space Ghost Coast to Coast*.

Before landing at the Cartoon Network, Chip worked for two years at other Turner Divisions, beginning with the Publicity Department at Turner Cable Sales. Then he began doing Public Relations for Turner's *WCW Wrestling*, where he received what he calls his first taste of "real PR - phone work, writing press releases and figuring photo shoots."

A dedicated animation buff, Chip was a natural for the Cartoon Network's Public Relations Department, where his soft spoken, gentlemanly ways made his off the wall sense of humor even more disarming. My favorite Chip Duffey moment has to be a deadpan message left on our answering machine announcing when "Mr. Ghost" would be available for an interview, adding that we would have to be finished by 6:30 to allow him sufficient "Phantom Cruiser time" to reach his next appointment.

It is important for Public Relations material to match the tone of the client that it represents. That was never a problem for Chip, whose January, 1996 epistle announcing a new season of *Coast*



Mr. Chip Duffey relaxing at home.

thing in his imagination. Peter Fonda, for example, suggests in an upcoming episode, "Hey, can you have a graphic artist come in and draw eyeballs on Space Ghost?" Of course, the writers seized the opportunity and viewers will actually see that happen.

Because the show is only 15 minutes in length, and usually incorporates a side story involving the animated characters, a large percentage of the interview almost always ends up on the proverbial cutting room floor. Chip acknowledges that the writers must always be mindful of the fact that *Space Ghost Coast to Coast* is "in its heart" still a talk show. He says that perhaps the show may not appeal to those who tune in to see a particular guest, because they may not see enough of their favorite. However, he also notes that many regular viewers seem to like the more "plot heavy" shows focusing on the misadventures of Space Ghost, Zorak and Moltar.

Perhaps in an attempt to establish a balance between talk show and cartoon show, a few episodes last season stretched into half hour format. Chip says this is not going to be part of a trend, because the staff feels much more comfortable with the shorter format, although the occasional longer show has not been ruled out if the situation requires it.

Sadly, plans to pair *Space Ghost*

Coast to Coast with another 15 minute talk show hosted by fellow Hanna Barbera 60s superhero *Birdman* seem to be on hold. However, Birdman made a brief, hysterical appearance on *Coast to Coast* bemoaning his unemployment, and complaining that his wife ran off with his former superior, the suave Falcon 7. And, although hesitant to call it a back door pilot, Chip is happy to report that Birdman will "spend some time behind the desk" on a *Coast to Coast* episode this season.

Meanwhile, the Cartoon Network has found an interesting companion piece for *Coast to Coast* in the Hanna Barbera superhero cartoons of the same era that spawned Space Ghost. However, at the suggestion of Program Coordinator Stuart Shaklee, these episodes air with a laugh track and other stangely inappropriate (or sometimes strangely appropriate) sound effects, i.e., an evil sorcerer torturing Tara from *The Herculoids* may enter to the kind of applause usually reserved for Fonzie on old *Happy Days* reruns.

Those among us that pay attention to such trivia may note that *Coast to Coast* is probably the only late night talk show to air with a "Y-7" rating, meaning that it is considered "Appropriate for Children Over 7." This is all the more surprising because of the show's edgy reputation.

"That's kind of a unique thing

about *Space Ghost Coast to Coast*," muses Chip. "A lot of people think that we're kind of a subversive show. But if you were to go from Episode 1 and scan these things all the way through, you'll find that there isn't a lot that you wouldn't feel comfortable sitting your kids down in front of.

"We strive to stay away from bad words or any kind of joke that's too risqué in a sexual sense or a situation that's potentially too violent. We govern ourselves really well, because the fact of the matter is that...kids [like] cartoons.

"Yes, it's safe to say that most of the people who watch *Space Ghost Coast to Coast* are older, but we also know that kids, if around the TV, will find the Cartoon Network no matter what time of the day it is."

Although he doesn't remember any major controversy surrounding the show, he is confident that "When something major happens and a lot of people are upset about something, you know it, believe me."

He cites as an example the Cartoon Network's 1997 April Fool's Day prank, when regularly scheduled programming was preempted so that a single *Screwy Squirrel* cartoon could be shown - repeatedly for several hours!

"Certainly, that wasn't offensive in any way, except maybe to some people's sense of humor or patience. But boy, the phones rang off the hook!" Viewers were so persistent that Chip personally got a number of messages on his answering machine, despite the fact that his office number is not readily available.

"A lot of people seemed to think it was a mistake. [We got calls saying] 'Hey, I don't think you're aware of this, but you're playing the same cartoon over and over.' A lot of people were legitimately calling us and saying, 'Hey, I've got kids here and they're really mad with me because I can't make the Cartoon Network show the show that's supposed to be on.' We got our hands slapped by our viewers, but it's great that people care."

An unabashed fan of *Coast to Coast*, Chip also made a cameo appearance in the 1995 episode *Jerk* as a disappointed viewer who calls in hoping to talk to Space Ghost's guest, hardware store owner Palmer Mills, but gets the Ghost instead.

Last season, Chip actually appeared on camera in an all live action episode spoofing those terrible reenactments of the O.J. Simpson trial. While fellow Writer/Producer Andy Merrill presided over the show as Space Ghost, just as he does in the live action segments of *Coast to Coast* spin-off *Cartoon Planet*, the rest of the staff, billed as "The Ghost Planet Dinner Theater of Middleville, Georgia," appeared as Zorak, Moltar and the various guests in line by line recreations of scenes from earlier episodes. Chip? Well, he and four other staffers appeared collectively as "Banjo," the titular giant killer sea monkey of the second season pilot.

Despite these brief appearances, he doesn't foresee an on-air career, although he does occasionally find himself in the recording studio. "You get a rough cut back and if you do a rewrite sometimes, and the voice talent isn't available to come back in and record a line, a lot of times, we just do the scratch track ourselves. None of that's ever aired, but I've got whole episodes where half the voices are me...My bad Zorak impression, my bad Moltar, my bad Space Ghost. And those are always amusing."

Not counting his current animated "boss," Chip says that "I don't think that a stronger cartoon character has ever been created than *Daffy Duck*. I can't help but laugh no matter how many times I've seen a particular gag. You know him; you know him well and he's just funny."

When pressed about his other favorites, Chip reluctantly admits to liking another famous mallard. "I always was a big fan of *Yakky Doodle*. I'm a sucker for that little ducky voice. I'm just utterly charmed every time I see that and it's embarrassing to admit." A child of the 70s, he also still enjoys many of the "oddball characters" from Hanna Barbera shows of the era, like *Scooby Doo*, *Hong Kong Phooey* and *The Super Globetrotters*.

"That's the nice thing about working at the Cartoon Network. This is my childhood. There's so much of it that I remember in a nostalgic sense...As I've gotten older I appreciate the Warner and old MGM stuff more, but I'm still very fond of the old Hanna Barbera stuff because they were such a cartoon superstore in the 70's."

When asked what advice he would give to those looking to find work in the

animation industry, Chip is more serious, but equally eloquent. "Be passionate about what you love and figure out what you are uniquely suited to do. We all have different talents and there are places in the industry for all different kinds of people...There are hundreds of different avenues."

"If you take a snapshot of the Cartoon Network ten years from now...Increasingly, we're starting to see a new kind of employee. That's somebody that grew up as kind of a cartoon fanatic, was delighted when Cartoon Network came on the air and said 'I'm gonna go work for them!' And they found their way here."

He sees this as ultimately the ideal because, "You can't fake passion or enthusiasm for your subject matter. Writing is something that naturally came easy to me, and since I've been at Cartoon Network, the show I've been most passionate about is *Space Ghost*. Suddenly I find myself writing for it!"

"I guess my advice is 'Figure out what you love. Figure out what you love about it, and then using that as a guide, figure out where your talents are, 'cause there's a way to make it work.'"

--Judith Reboy



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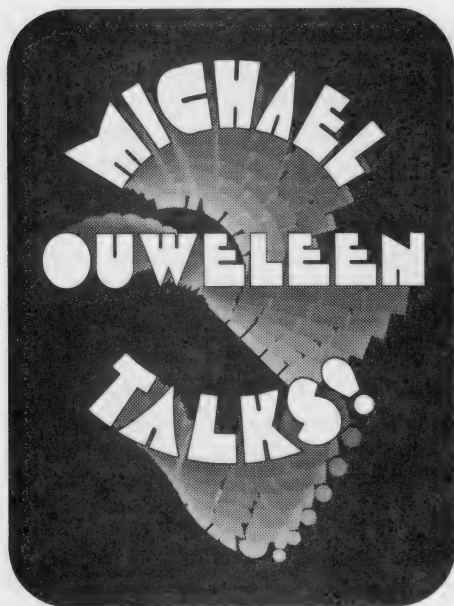
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by Judith Reboy

With all the programming available to contemporary television viewers, one of the toughest jobs in the industry has to be enticing viewers to stay put during the commercial breaks, let alone to pay attention to station identifications.

Clever on-air promos have been the hallmark of the Cartoon Network. Currently, viewers can see Droopy Dog and Shaggy from *Scooby Doo* aping a scene from *Pulp Fiction* or a live action kid playing tennis with one of the *Herculoids*.

What kind of mind would even imagine such scenarios? ANiMATO! decided to find out. On Air Creative Director Michael Ouweleen heads the department responsible for all those wonderful promos. A former copy writer for J. Walter Thompson, Ouweleen then moved to Korey Kay Advertising, where he worked on an imaging campaign for cable's Comedy Central.

His association with the channel proved to be short lived, as they began doing their promotional material in-house, not unlike his current position at the Cartoon Network. "I learned from being burned," he jokes.

Throughout his career, his love of, and desire to work in, animation showed through. He wrote an episode of *Twisted Tales of Felix the Cat* entitled *Copy Cat*, which was directed by famed British director Paul Vester. Around that time, he also had a show in development at Nickelodeon. As a footnote, the executive in

charge of the latter project was Linda Simensky, now programming chief at the Cartoon Network, and according to Ouweleen, "Everybody's Patron Saint."

Given his interest in the animation art form, it seems inevitable that he would jump at the chance to work for "The Home of the Top Toon Stars." His delightfully warped sense of humor suits the irreverent tone of the Cartoon Network perfectly.

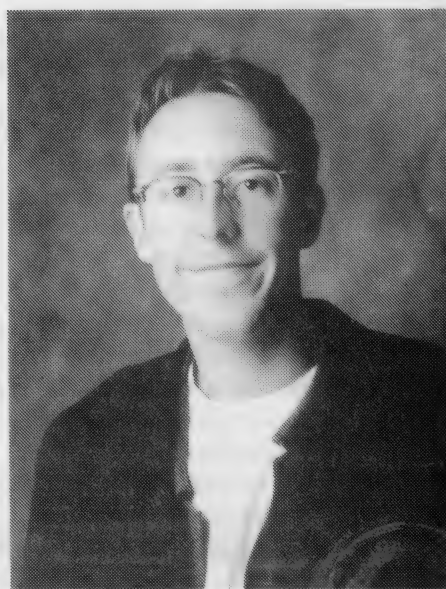
Among his innovations is a series of one minute fillers entitled *Cartoons That Didn't Make It*, featuring some of the strangest ideas ever broadcast: *Rupert the Grouper* features an entertainer who is a literal fish out of water and reacts like...well, like a live action fish would. *Heidi and the Yodelers* is a spoof of *Josie and the Pussycats* starring a lederhosen-clad rock band who travels in a bus shaped like a wedge of Swiss cheese.

Frothy Dog stars a lovable but unfortunately rabid dog who just wants to be hugged. *Salt and Slug* chronicles the star-crossed love affair between its two principals. Needless to say, these segments have a bit more bite than your average filler. When asked about these shorts, Ouweleen jokes that he'd like to make lunchboxes and collectibles starring Rupert the Grouper, "like [the show] actually happened."

Ouweleen points to the Network's current image campaign as a particular source of pride. It features a pair of detectives finding 'toon influences in various civilizations. One segment features a tribesman with a *Squidly Diddly* glass reminiscent of the Sacred Coke Bottle in *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. In another, the detectives interview an elderly witness describing a creature with a distinctive cry of "Ru-Ru-Ru" which turns out to be Dino the Dino. Ouweleen says that the campaign "does a good job of positioning the network on a kind of psychological level." Another plus is that they're really funny!

Another popular campaign is *The Cartoon Network Thing To Do*, which uses classic clips to encourage viewers to defy the laws of physics just like the 'toons do, like walking upside down.

When asked if a particular character or type of character lends itself better to the promos, Ouweleen says he expects *Johnny Bravo*, the star of a new series set



Michael Ouweleen

to debut in July to "explode all over the air."

He also adds that "The Cartoon Network historically challenges the kind of character that you wouldn't expect us to." One such star is emerging in the current crop of promos. "There's a *Quicky Koala* frenzy going through my department," he laughs. "It's like Paul McCartney on the back of a Beatles album cover. He'll just keep showing up in weird places." One recent spot had Quicky facing off against Taz on a game show called "Pick Your Marsupial." Taz emerges victorious by eating poor little Quicky.

Ouweleen himself mentions a desire to use the Schmoo. The gentle creature from Al Capp's *Li'l Abner* had a brief television run in the 1970's on *The New Schmoo*, a *Scooby Doo* clone, and *Fred and Barney Meet the Schmoo*, where he was the sidekick to Police Officers Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble. Both shows occasionally turn up on the Cartoon Network.

But the crown jewels of the Network, and Ouweleen's personal favorites are the Looney Tunes, particularly Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck. "Bugs is it for me, period, among all art forms: TV, movies, everything. The timing that character has is just unbelievable. He's just an amazing achievement."

The Looney Tunes will be a visible presence in the on-air promotions. Ouweleen says that he plans on using them in a more "traditional" manner, evoking

the irreverent feel of the classic Chuck Jones shorts. A clever spot using the *Rabbit Season/Duck Season* footage twisted into an argument over who gets top billing on *Bugs and Daffy Tonight* shows that Ouweleen has the skill to back up this claim.

Although admittedly more of a Warner Brothers fan, he has nothing but praise for the new generation of characters to come to the Cartoon Network from Hanna-Barbera, particularly *Dexter's Laboratory* and the upcoming *Cow and Chicken* series.

One of the perks of a job well done in the cable television industry is the wide audience your work reaches. In Ouweleen's case, the advertising community he emerged from has begun to tell him that "this department here is causing a ruckus and people are starting to notice that we're doing fun, good work here. People are starting to get jealous and that means a lot."

He adds that "An on air department doesn't have to be that important to a network, but this one is. This one supplies

a huge amount of tone to what we've got going on here, so I'm really glad. Seriously, every day I come in here and something great happens or somebody in my department surprises me with a really great idea. The creative freedom is gigantic and as long as we keep an eye on what makes cartoons good, we'll be all right."

Occasionally, of course, there will be a viewer who doesn't quite understand the channel's off the wall sensibility, and that can be a down side. "[A few viewers] sort of view the TV as a babysitter for their kids. If we put on something that's a little edgier or a bit more true to the nature of theatricals, they get a little scared and we get phone calls. It's hard. We don't put anything on that's that questionable. We really don't."

However, on the whole, he welcomes feedback, positive and negative from cartoon fanatics everywhere. "The fans keep us honest."

Among other projects he has been involved in was the creation of the intro cartoon for the Cartoon Network sponsored *Ma-TOON-nays* at General Cinema

theaters, monthly Saturday morning showings of a popular family film such as *Babe* or *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm* preceded by one of the Cartoon Network's *World Premiere Toons* shorts.

He also commissioned Chris Landy, a former art director from Korey Kay to produce hilarious slides to be shown in between features at General Cinema, such as a fake tabloid headline with Boo Boo Bear being grilled about appearing in only a bow tie, as, of course, he has for the last 30 years. ("I was young. I needed the work.")

Ouweleen says that there are two versatile formulas to make a good solid on air promotion. Some characters, like *Dexter* and *Bugs Bunny*, are treated in a true to life fashion, while others, like *Space Ghost* and *Quicky Koala* are mined for their "ironic" potential. "God, there's no end to the stuff we can do with those two paths."

Given the wonderful things he and his team have imagined thus far, I can hardly wait to see what they come up with next.

--Judith Reboyn





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101 Dalmatians

The Series

by Glenn Anton

"Not long ago, there lived in London a young married couple of Dalmatian dogs named Pongo and Missis Pongo ... They were lucky enough to own a young married couple of humans named Mr. and Mrs. Dearly, who were gentle, obedient, and unusually intelligent - almost canine at times."

Dodie Smith's *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* was first published in Great Britain in 1956. Since then, the book was printed by Viking Penguin in 1957, adapted into the Disney animated feature film in 1961, and remade as the 1996 live-action film.

The public has fallen in love with the canine crew: the 1992 video release of the animated *101 Dalmatians* landed it in the Top Ten for video sales and as of March, 1997, the live-action film had grossed \$135 million domestically. That is why, with the rapidly expanding world of television animation, Walt Disney contacted Jumbo Pictures, Inc. to produce a series for ABC. Thirteen episodes of *101 Dalmatians: The Series* will air at 8 a.m. ET/7 a.m. PT as part of ABC's Saturday morning lineup. Another fifty-two episodes have been created for syndication.

"That adds up to over a hundred-and-one stories," laughed co-executive producer Jim Jenkins, creator of the children's series *Doug* and *Brand Spanking New Doug*.

The idea of developing *101 Dalmatians* into a series started long ago for Dean Valentine, President of Walt Disney Television Animation. But it wasn't until the success of *Brand Spanking New Doug* - which was the first series Jumbo Pictures produced under Disney - that Valentine decided to go ahead with the series. He proceeded to give Jenkins and Campbell (who are

collaborating as executive producers along with Disney's Roberts Gannaway and Tony Craig) the opportunity to turn the Disney classic into an ongoing series. It's an opportunity that has been a delight and a surprise, flattering as well as nerve-racking, for Jenkins and his partner at Jumbo Pictures, David Campbell.

"One day, Dean Valentine casually asked me what I thought of the classic film, *101 Dalmatians*," recalled Jenkins. "I told him I loved it, and that it was one of my all time favorite movies. He said, 'Great! Why don't you take a look at how it might work as a series.' I honestly didn't know that was where the conversation was leading, but that's how it all started."

Jenkins and Campbell examined John Hughes' live-action screenplay, screened the 1961 animated feature, and read Dodie Smith's book. From the information they gathered, they worked out what they considered the logical next step in the story. The resulting series concept is an entirely rethought scenario that centers around the adventures of three frisky dalmatian pups and a neurotic chicken.

The TV series begins where the movies left off. Strapped for space with a hundred-and-one Dalmatians in their city apartment, Roger and Anita Dearly move to the farm where, in the movies, the pups hid from Cruella de Vil. But that deliciously evil villainess could not be left out of the series, could she? Of course not. Living next door to the Dearly farm is good old Cruella. And she has a new side of herself to show viewers. She's shedded her old snake-like skin to reveal a new 90s overboard politically correct side of herself. Besides being an entrepreneur run amok, she's attempting - without much success - to quit smoking.

Of the three puppies that star in the series, two are from the films - Lucky,

the energetic leader, and his brother Rolly, who prefers eating and sleeping to adventuring. The third pup, Cadpig (which means the runt of a litter of pigs), is the sister to the other two, and is based on a character from the Dodie Smith book.

"In the two films, the puppies are pretty much one character," said Campbell. "For the television show, we had to break that all down. We have many more characters, many more dogs to get to know, other animals from the farm, creatures from the swamp, people from town and neighboring towns - it's an entirely new world for kids to discover."

Continued Jenkins, "We went with focusing on particular characters instead of a hundred-and-one of them. We chose which would be the strongest characters to develop. In a series, you need a central protagonist, and Lucky seemed the perfect leader, the all-American Tom Sawyer type. Rolly, with all his 'I'm so hungry' jokes, seemed the perfect best friend for Lucky. In the original book, Cadpig was the runt of the litter; for the series, we gave her a big mouth to spout her cheerful New Age-style philosophy. And Spot, the Dalmatian wanna-be chicken, is a Woody Allen-ish-type worrier - too smart for her own good, which is another great source of humor."

Since the earliest stages of production, education and inspiration have been one of the most important aspects to the series. The characters are not treated as silly animals, but kids. And these kids are friends who pal around and get into trouble, tough situations, and ultimately must deal with kid issues.

"We put this foursome in jeopardies and jams that kids will relate to," noted Jenkins. "For example, playing a game of 'double dare' that gets out of hand - and then take them through the problem until they resolve it. And along the way, they - and the kids watching the show - will discover they've learned something that's really helpful."

Added Campbell, "We're trying to tell stories that dig into real kid issues - acceptance, self-image, dealing with bullies - the problems that kids identify and deal with. Even the most outlandish stories in the series have a reason for being told besides just being wacky fun."

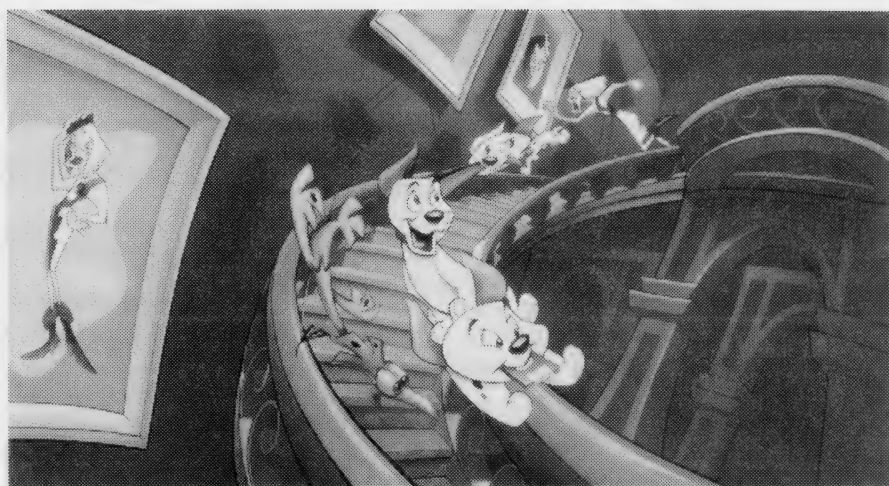
"We have certain beliefs that make the hardcore cartoon people probably think we're sort of square. We love jokes, we love verbal humor, and we love sight gags. But it's sort of like *The Simpsons*. It's wacky and funny and you have a lot of cul-de-sacs where you go for the sake of a joke and nothing else. But every time you watch *The Simpsons*, there's some little grace note, in the end or somewhere along the way, that you know that these characters care for one another or that they want to do the right thing. It's kind of sweet in a way. There's always something sweet about *The Simpsons*."

"I've been in this business for twenty years," added Jenkins. "My philosophical position has always been that you can tell these funny stories which behind them exists something of value for the kids. We want to tell stories - hilariously funny and crazy and wacky - but we want them to have content. When I say content, I don't mean that I'm out there trying to teach French. It's really about moral issues, social issues, cognitive issues. All of these attributes are valuable to kids. When we do this, we have the kids point of view in mind. These are stories of hope, that are hopeful and can inspire kids."

Campbell continued with the issue at hand, "Jim used the term 'hope' and I think *101 Dalmatians* accomplishes that. We never want to just have a nihilistic, embittered, dark vision about anything. The series isn't built on cynical smart-aleck humor. *101 Dalmatians* is a hopeful place. It's fun to be there, and it's funny while you are there. It has a hopeful, upbeat attitude."

Noted Valentine, "In bringing *101 Dalmatians* to television, our goal wasn't merely to copy the classic, but to give the series a life all its own. The key to the success of any new program is its storytelling, and Jim Jenkins and David Campbell have created a scenario and characters that are not only entertaining, but also provide a terrific opportunity for kids to learn something significant."

To better understand what the kids of today thought of the original Disney animated feature, the film was shown to children, who responded by saying that, although they were entertained by the characters, they felt alienated



Cadpig, Spot the Chicken, Lucky and Rolly escaping with Cruella's computer disk.
(© 1997 Walt Disney Television Animation)

from the traditional look and graphic style. In short, the 1961 film was outdated. The decision was that the concept had to be made contemporary.

The designs were left up to Disney co-executive producer Tony Craig, who altered the original line and color. The result was a look that was more present day, but not so extreme that it would have no connection to its past.

"We looked at the designs of the original animated characters - they're beautiful designs - and we decided we wanted to build on them, to give the new series a more graphic look," explained Craig. "We tried a thick line-thin line combination, which is much more graphic in style. To this we added bolder colors, and the result is a more dynamic, more contemporary feel."

Jenkins and Campbell are highly optimistic about the potential of the series. Nobody involved in the production believes that there have been, or will be, any complications in the East coast, West coast venture. In fact, the feeling is that the series couldn't be any other way.

With Gannaway and Craig bringing their gag-driven "The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa" series, and Jenkins and Campbell mastery of the content-driven Doug series, the combination is expected to awaken a vital mixture of creative juices that will hopefully lead to a hit series. The four executive producers hit it off and there was no ego, politics, or ladder climbing to get in the way. From the moment the project started, all of their energy went to making a great show.

Considering that Jenkins and Campbell have been friends since 1979 and business partners for the past seven years, the two are open books to one another ... open comic books. Just putting them together makes for a fine comedy team that ultimately leads to non-stop laughter.

When asked what they both bring to the series, Jenkins opened with "We share the same tastes in humor, but David is a great editor, and has both a strong business sense and great instincts about people. I often come up with something, and he'll say 'Let's go this way with it'. It's like a good game of tennis."

Then Campbell continued, "Jim has a very hilarious artistic sensibility. He's a great designer. You could look at my designs as funny, too ... but that's because I have no artistic skills at all. Between the two of us, I have the looks. I'm a very handsome man. Plus, I have a fine singing voice." By now, talking is replaced by laughter.

Hopes are that laughter will be the norm when *101 Dalmatians: The Series* airs. If everything goes as planned, it will become evident that the Disney/Jumbo Pictures brain trust has captured and contained all of the zaniness and family fun of the animated classic into that Disney magic. And the episodes will not only be entertaining, but educational as well.

--Glenn Anton

101 Dalmatians Episode Guide

The following list includes the tentative air dates and episode information.

Episode One: September 6

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

After moving into the country, the dalmatians, who dislike their new home, steal Roger's downpayment check with the hopes that giving it to Cruella will help them get their wish of moving back to the city. But Cruella has different plans.

Episode Two: September 13

FULL METAL PULLET

Spot and the dalmatians learn about teamwork, creativity, and courage in the Bark Brigade.

DOUGH THE RIGHT THING

The dalmatians find a purse full of money and must decide what to do.

Episode Three: September 20

HE FOLLOWED ME HOME

An elephant left behind by a circus train might mean trouble if Cruella has her way.

LOVE 'EM AND FLEA 'EM

A puppy love-triangle leads to jealous revenge.

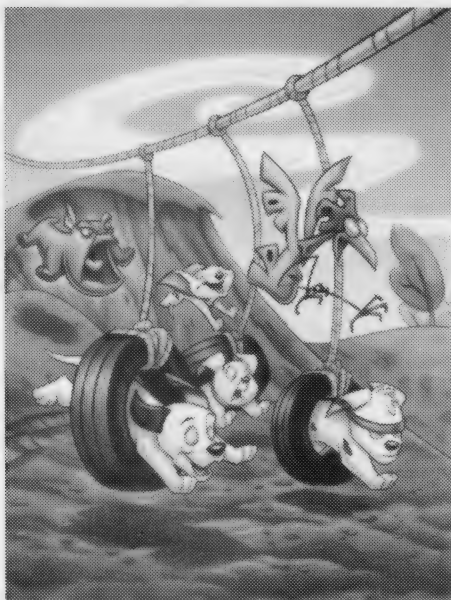
Episode Four: September 27

HOWL NOON

The dalmatians' attempts to help Lt. Pug of the Bark Brigade face a childhood rival leads to several mishaps.

EASY ON THE LIES

The dalmatians discover that lies can be more painful than the truth.



Episode Five: October 4

TWO FOR THE SHOW

Who will be Lucky's partner on the animal game show "Squeal of Fortune"?

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEDOG

The dalmatians compete against each other in an obstacle course.

Episode Six: October 11

BAD TO THE BONE

Tired of being bullied by Mooch, Rolly tries to find a way of proving that he is a tough guy.

SOUTHERN FRIED CRUELLA

The dalmatians try to stop Cruella from passing herself off as their owner, Cruella Mae, in an attempt to get a large order for her common folk clothing line, Poorwear.

Episode Seven: October 18

SWINE SONG

Rolly believes that Dumpling, the piglet, is his first love, and tries everything to win her heart.

WATCH FOR FALLING IDOLS

While the television series *Thunderbolt* is filmed at Dearly farm, the dalmatians discover that the canine star is nothing like the role he plays.

Episode Eight: October 25

THE HIGH PRICE OF FAME

Spot will do practically anything to earn the respect of her friends.

THE GREAT CAT INVASION

To avoid going through Lt. Pug's training exercises for the Great Cat Invasion, the dalmatians tell him that cats were sighted at Cruella's house. What nobody realizes is that Cruella does have cats to promote her new line of Feline Frocks.

Episode Nine: November 1

NO TRAIN, NO GAIN

The dalmatians set out to stop Cruella, who has hijacked a vintage train car.

Episode Ten: November 8

ROLLY'S EGG-CELLENT ADVENTURE

When the eggs Rolly has agreed to egg sit hatch, he decides to teach the chicks dog skills, which come in handy when Scorch kidnaps them for his upcoming dinner.

WILD CHICK CHASE

The dalmatians learn about the responsibility of baby-sitting when they bring Peeps, a tiny chick, along with them on a swimming trip.

Episode Eleven: November 15

DOGS OF DEVIL

The dalmatian pups are afraid that an argument might lead to the family breaking up.

DOG'S BEST FRIEND

Lucky and a stray German Shepherd become friends, leaving Rolly jealous about losing his friend.

Episode Twelve: November 22

OUT TO LAUNCH

While on Cruella's property, the dalmatians stumble across a Kaput-nik battle cruiser and are tricked by the ship's computer into launching it into space, where they are horrified to discover that the computer intends to conquer the world.

PROPHET AND LOSS

Everyone believes Cadpig to be psychic, and to maintain their admiration, she goes overboard with her predictions.

Episode Thirteen: Nov 29

A CHRISTMAS CRUELLA

On Christmas Eve, Cruella fires Anita, then gets the "Scrooge" treatment, dalmatian style.



Lt. Pug, Lucky, Cadpig, Rolly,
Tripod and Spot the Chicken
(© Walt Disney Television Animation)

Cruella de Vil and her new
accomplice, Scorch the Ferret
(© Walt Disney Television Animation)

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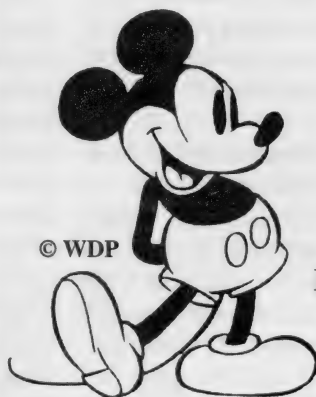
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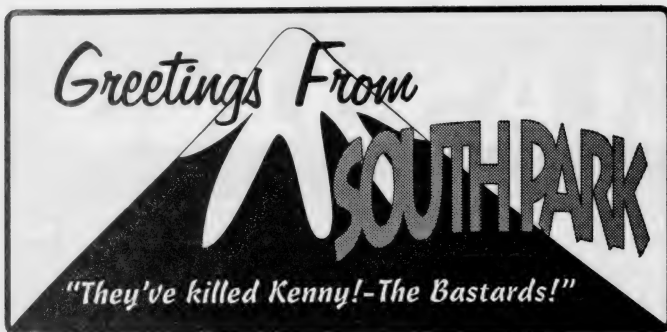
BOOKS

**KEY
RINGS**

STAMPS

GAMES

STILLS



by Chuck Miller

In all the *Peanuts* television specials ever made, Charlie Brown never said anything coarser than "Good Grief." Warner Bros. characters kept their cursing to the level of "Sufferin' Succotash," or "Great Horny Toads!" And the last time a cartoon character swore on film was a Popeye cartoon where both Popeye and Bluto blurt out, "I'll be a - " before two hands slap CENSORED stickers over their mouths.

So why does the hottest prime time animated program feature enough cursing to make Fritz the Cat blush? Where characters verbally jab at religion, politics, racism, prejudice - all at the same time? Where the same hapless character dies - every episode, spawning national catchphrases like "OH MY GOD! THEY KILLED KENNY!! YOU BASTARDS!!!"

Welcome to the world of South Park, the new animated series on Comedy Central. The settings are simple - a classroom, a bus stop, a cafeteria. The animation resembles simple stop-motion paper cutouts. But in six weeks, it has become the first animated program on a basic cable network to receive the TV-MA rating (two other TV-MA programs, *Spawn* and *Spicy City*, air on the pay cable service HBO).

Hard to believe it all began from an elaborate Christmas card.

In 1994, Brian Graden was the head of Fox Broadcasting's Foxlab television development program, with such shows as *America's Most Wanted*, *Cops* and *Studs* under his belt. In an effort to send out a memorable Christmas card, he recruited independent filmmakers Trey Parker and Matt Stone to create a 5-minute Christmas movie. Parker and Stone's first project, *Cannibal The Musical*, played at the Sundance Film Festival and was later distributed by Troma Entertainment, so

they were eager to create Graden's project. With a \$2,000 budget, Parker and Stone created a short where Jesus and Santa Claus fight a bloody war over who can truly claim the title "The Spirit of Christmas."

"I did the animation using construction paper cutouts," Parker told writer Kenneth Turan, "and we both improvised the dialogue, screaming obscenities at each other in my basement while my mom was baking fudge upstairs. It cost \$750 and we pocketed the rest."

Graden distributed copies of *The Spirit of Christmas* as a video holiday card. The recipients dubbed copies and sent it to their friends, until it became an underground classic. "By February, we were hearing about it from every state," said Parker to writer Kenneth Turan. "We'd never bothered to put our name on it, so the whole thing came full circle when a friend from Ohio sent us a copy and said, 'You've got to see this.'"

It wasn't long before Hollywood figured out who created *The Spirit of Christmas*, and agents pounded on Stone and Parker's doors for more projects. In 1996, they sold the idea for a weekly series based on the children in *Spirit of Christmas* to the Comedy Central cable channel as *South Park*.

Creating a paper-cutout weekly series would take months per episode, so Parker and Stone compromised - they scanned in the original *Spirit of Christmas* cutouts into a computer, and used CGI animation and an Alias workstation to recreate their cutout world. Matt Stone told *Wired* writer Mike Tanner that using the stop-motion paper cutouts for South Park "took us forever, because it was 22 minutes long. It was hell on this earth. We had to devise a system so 10 people could do it and it would all look like one hand."

The characters are still hand-moved within the computers, but thanks to 3-D software, the shadowy illusion of paper cutouts is still apparent. "Everything is moved manually across the screen," says Stone in *Wired*, "so it gets that organic jumpy look."

Parker and Stone not only provide the animation for the series, they also provide most of the characters' voices (with the exception of the character Chef, voiced by 70s soul singer Isaac Hayes). They also write the dialogue, which is so laced with scatological references that the series has received the TV-MA rating. "The show is designed for adults. And we're doing everything we can as a network to make sure that it's adults who watch it," says Comedy Central spokesman Tony Fox to Detroit Free Press editor Mike Duffy.

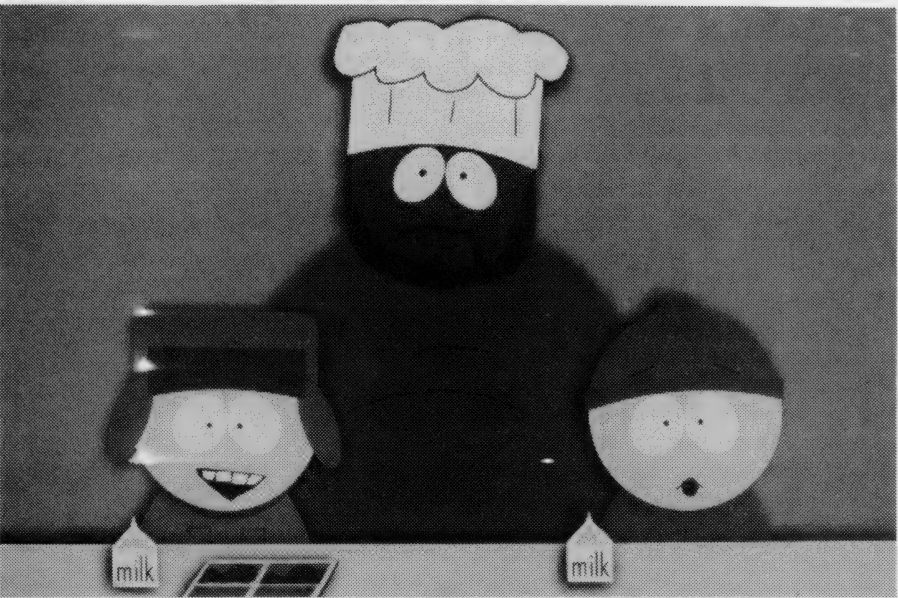
"Eight-year-old kids talk like that all the time," says Stone. "That's the big myth."

"They talk worse than these kids talk," adds Parker. "I did when I was in third grade."

But not everybody is enamored with *South Park*. "*South Park* is rated as 'mature,'" said Mary Ann Banta, a representative of the National Coalition on Television Violence, in an interview with Entertainment Tonight, "and one has to chuckle when one hears that, because I think its rating should be 'immature.'"

Ever since its debut, *South Park* has become Comedy Central's highest-rated original series. The show has already spawned a cult following on the information superhighway, as Internet users have visited 15,000 hits on Comedy Central's *South Park* website more than 15,000 times in the first month (<http://www.comedycentral.com/southpark>), while other webheads have created more than 50 "unofficial" websites (like http://users.accessus.net/~joec/dir/south_park, and <http://www.adequate.com/mini-site/SouthPark>, for example). "I believe the number of fan-created websites is directly related to the popularity of the show," says Patrick Delahanty, creator of the adequate.com website. "*South Park* has produced higher ratings than any other show in Comedy Central's history. It's the cutting edge humor which attracts people. People don't expect four typical 8-year-olds to be spouting foul mouthed language, causing trouble, or getting killed as much as these four do. Humor is rooted in the unexpected."

Still, Comedy Central doesn't let every episode go through unchecked, despite the TV-MA rating and late evening timeslot. In the original pilot episode of



Kyle, Chef and Stan. (© 1997 Comedy Central)

South Park, Cartman Gets An Anal Probe, the boys have to get out of school to rescue Ike from the space aliens. In the original print, Chef gives the kids hot tamales to eat in order to get out of school. Three 5th graders force Cartman to eat all of the tamales, causing him to start farting fire. Comedy Central thought that scene went too far, and the scene was re-edited. What finally aired was this - the fire farts are a result of an alien probe, which pops out of Cartman's butt and looks around. When Chef sees the probe, he pulls the fire alarm and tells the kids, "now's your chance to get out of school."

A line of *South Park* clothing is available in Spencer Gifts and through Comedy Central's website, and computer-wired fans have already swapped out some of their internal computer .wav files with phrases from the show like *I'm not fat, I'm big boned*, and *Oh My God, They Killed Kenny* (suitable for that recycling bin in Windows 95). The original 5-minute short, *The Spirit of Christmas*, has itself found a new home, playing to packed houses at Spike & Mike's 1997 Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation.

And after the initial run of six episodes, Parker and Stone are working hard on a second season of *South Park* episodes, including a Halloween episode and a new Christmas episode. Will we see a return fight between Jesus and Santa Claus in the new season, maybe this time in a steel cage? Tune in and find out.

Character Guide To *SOUTH PARK*

Stan Marsh

How to spot him: He always wears a pompommed touque on his head. Is the conscience of the group and a pretty decent kid, but is not adverse to causing a little mischief to go along with the group. Secretly has a crush on Wendy Testaburger, but is embarrassed that his friends know about it. Quarterback of the *South Park* Cows grade school football team. Menaced by his older sister Shelly.

Voice: Trey Parker.

Kyle Brozlovski

He wears a cap with ear flaps. The kids tease him about his Jewish heritage, but he can stand up for himself ("Don't you belittle my people," he yells to Cartman in *The Spirit of Christmas*, "Don't you oppress me, !#\$%%!"). Kyle is the brains of the group, and sometimes the most reactionary. Backup quarterback for the South Park Cows football team, but probably would be better as a punter (ask Ike). Voice: Matt Stone.

Eric Cartman

The fat kid of the crew. Can stuff a whole bag of Cheesy Poofs down his throat in one sitting. Usually watches programs like *Jesus and Pals*, because that's what kind of appropriate programming his mother lets him see. Has a serious problem with flatulence - once let out a flaming fart that set a cat on fire! Center for the South Park Cows football team. Voice: Trey Parker.

Kenny McCormick

Probably the most vulgar of the foursome, if we could actually hear his words through his windbreaker hood. Would drink gasoline on a bet (and does, in the episode *Volcano*). Can't seem to stay alive past the closing credits. Running back for the South Park Cows football team. Voice: Matt Stone (talking into the crook of his elbow to get that "muffled" sound).

Chef

Burly but cuddly African-American cafeteria chef for South Park Elementary. Also doubles as football coach of the South Park Cows. Drove his Town & Country from Mississippi to South Park because of his fascination for UFO's and the paranormal (which has high concentrations in South Park). Always protective of the children, and willing to give them necessary advice - even if it is couched in a sheet-shaking, pornographically-laced soulful serenade. Voice : Isaac Hayes.

Wendy Testaburger

Stan's classmate and secret crush. Unfortunately, every time he speaks to her, he throws up. Made a cameo appearance in *The Spirit of Christmas*, sitting on Santa's lap. Voice: Shannen Cassidy.

Mr. Garrison

The kids' 3rd grade teacher. A former ventriloquist, Mr. Garrison brings his hand puppet, Mr. Hat, to school and uses him as a teaching tool. His teaching skills are suspect (once gave a lecture about how Napoleon freed the Hebrews). His long association with Mr. Hat has given Mr. Garrison a split personality, with his id being channeled directly into the puppet. Voice: Trey Parker.

Mrs. Cartman

Cartman's overprotective mother. Willing to bake chocolate pot pies and purchase boxes of Cheesy Poofs for her portulent son. May be in a constant state of denial, which she channels into overbearing love for her son. Voice: Shannen Cassidy.

Uncle Jimbo

Stan's uncle and owner of a gun shop. Once wired up a mule to explode. Uses hand grenades to catch fish, and Uzis to hunt rabbits. Voice: Matt Stone.

Ned

Jimbo's compatriot and hunting buddy. Lost an arm in Vietnam; may have also lost some of his vocal cords (he speaks with an electronic squawk box). Voice: Trey Parker.

Officer Barbrady

The local constable who tries to keep a lid on all the weird happenings in South Park. From UFO landings to fender benders, Barbrady tries to conceal everything - once trying to convince people that black helicopters flying directly over his head were nothing more than pigeons.

Voice: Trey Parker.

The Mayor

A media-hungry politician, not adverse to hamming it up for the cameras, even attempting to do live retakes of her emotional on-camera outbursts. A Princeton graduate, the Mayor longs to leave this mountain town and be mayor of a larger city. Voice: Shannen Cassidy.

Pip

The British exchange student, and probably the only kid Cartman can beat up. Is probably the most accident-prone of the group; in the uncut pilot episode, he fractures his skull on a playground slide; in *Big Gay Al's Big Gay Boat Ride*, he plays football without a helmet (under orders from Chef). Voice: Matt Stone.

Ike

Kyle's baby brother. Because of Ike's football-shaped body, Kyle likes to play a good game of "Kick the Baby" with Ike. Ike's voice is provided by an actual baby.

Theme Song

(Sung by Les Claypool of Primus)

Claypool: I'm goin' out to South Park, gonna have myself a time.

Stan & Kyle: Friendly faces everywhere - humble folks without temptation.

Claypool: Goin' out to South Park, gonna leave my woes behind.

Cartman: Ample parking day or night. People spouting 'Howdy neighbor!'

Claypool: Headin' on out to South Park, gonna see if I can't unwind.

Kenny: Our hometown is bigger dammit, right down to the piece of granite.

(muffled, *Kenny's lyrics are a guess from Patrick Delahanty of adequate.com*)

Claypool: So come on out to South Park and meet some friends of mine.

SOUTH PARK Episode Guide

The Spirit of Christmas

The 5-minute episode that started it all. On Christmas Eve, Kyle, Stan, Cartman and Kenny argue over whether or not Kyle (who's Jewish) should be singing Christmas carols or Hannukah songs. In floats Jesus, who seeks retribution - and directions to the mall. At the mall, Jesus accuses Santa Claus of desecrating his birthday. The two start beating on each other in a religious-secular battle royal (Kenny dies when one of Santa's ninja throwing stars cuts his head off). After Stan and Kyle convince both parties to share Christmas, the kids go back to their holiday songs (even singing *Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel* when Kyle tells Stan that Jewish kids get presents for eight nights on Hannukah).

Cartman Gets An Anal Probe

(Episode 101, first aired 8/13/97)

Cartman has a dream that some aliens kidnapped him and did something to his rear end. He dismisses it as a dream (even when he starts farting fire and uncontrollably belts out a Warner Bros.-inspired chorus of *I Love To Sing-A*). Meanwhile, Kyle's brother Ike has disappeared after one too many games of "Kick The Baby," and Stan, Kyle and Wendy all think that Cartman's dream and Ike's disappearance may be linked to aliens. Trivia: Watch as the name on Chef's apron switches from upper to lower case and back - possibly because these scenes were added in last-minute edits.

Volcano

(Episode 103, first aired 8/20/97)

Stan's uncle Jimbo takes the boys on a hunting trip. Cartman, annoyed that nobody pays attention to him, creates a phony story about a monster on the mountain - the dreaded Scuzzlebutt, with an arm made of celery, a leg made of Patrick Duffy, a monster who turns his victims into wicker baskets. Meanwhile, Stan is dismayed when Jimbo pays more attention to Kenny because Kenny isn't afraid to shoot bunnies with an Uzi. Meanwhile, the town learns that the mountain is a long-dormant volcano - and is just about ready to explode, with the campers on it! Trivia: Although the mayor has already been identified as female, Chef calls her "Mr. Mayor" in this episode.

Weight Gain 4000

(Episode 102, first aired 8/27/97)

Thanks to Cartman's winning essay, South Park will receive a visit from entertainer Kathie Lee Gifford. Wanting to look good for television, Cartman begins binging on a mega mass shake drink, while Wendy tries to figure out how D+ student Cartman got a better grade than her in the essay contest. As for Mr. Garri-

son, he remembers when Kathie Lee beat him out in a talent contest, and through the machinations of the evil Mr. Hat, Garrison plots to kill the star. Trivia: Written on the South Park blackboard in Spanish are vulgar phrases for viewers to translate.

Big Gay Al's Big Gay Boat Ride

(Episode 104, first aired 9/3/97)

Stan's new dog Sparky has a proclivity for other dogs of the same sex, and the kids try to train the dog to be straight. The dog runs away, and Stan forsakes the football game against Middle Park, tracking Sparky down to Big Gay Al's Big Gay Animal Shelter - where Stan learns about toleration and understanding between gays and straights. Meanwhile at the football game, Jimbo and Ned try to rig an exploding donkey to detonate on the opponent's sidelines, so that South Park will beat the spread (Middle Park by 70). Trivia: The voice of Sparky is provided by actor George Clooney (who received one of the original "Christmas Card" episodes).

An Elephant Makes Love To A Pig

(Episode 105, first aired 9/10/97)

Kyle receives an elephant for a pet, but it's too big to keep in the house. After Mr. Garrison's lecture on genetic engineering, the boys experiment with trying to combine an elephant's DNA with the DNA of Cartman's potbellied pig Fluffy - so that Kyle could create a miniature pot-bellied elephant. Their visit to the South Park Genetic Engineering Laboratory for research purposes is a fruitless trip - but not before a Dr. Moreau-like scientist extracts blood for a mutant clone of Stan. Meanwhile, Stan's sister Shelly mercilessly beats him up at every opportunity.

Death

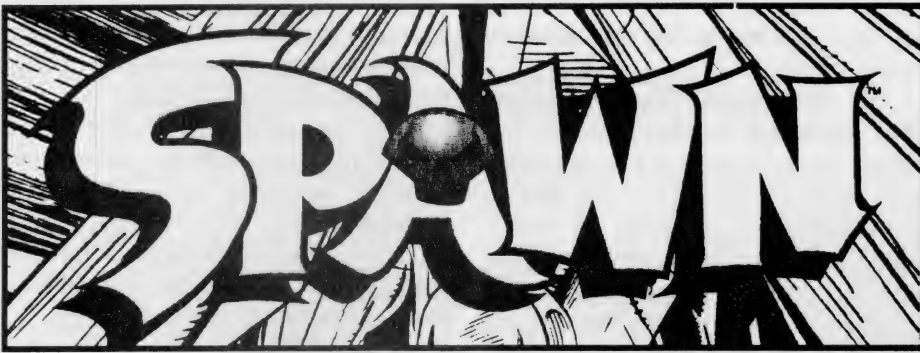
(Episode 106, first aired 9/17/97)

Stan's 102-year-old grandfather wants to die. Now. He'll even give Stan a dollar if Stan kills him. But the last time Stan killed something (Scuzzlebutt, in *Volcano*), he felt so much remorse that he couldn't kill anything else. Meanwhile, the parents of South Park are alarmed about a popular children's television show, *Terrence and Phillip*, containing nothing more than fart jokes ("toilet humor," according to Mr. Garrison), and go to New York City to get the show taken off the air. Meanwhile, the grim reaper makes a visit to South Park - and instead of Grandpa, he's chasing after Kyle, Stan, Kenny and Cartman!

Trivia: This time Kenny's father is the first one to die, as he gets slingshotted into the side of a building.

--Chuck Miller





A huge inflatable Spawn welcomes fans to the 1997 San Diego Comic Convention.
(Photo by Amid Amidi) *Spawn* © 1997 Todd McFarlane

Todd McFarlane's comic book star becomes a hot HBO animated mini-series

by Chuck Miller

Al Simmons was a government assassin who was himself murdered by his closest associates. As the final moments of his life flashed past his dimming eyes, he made a deal with the devil for one last chance to see his beloved wife.

They say be careful what you wish for. Simmons should have listened. Five years later, Simmons awakens with no memory, a powerful bodysuit with a flowing cloak and chains, and a clown-faced chaperon intent on training Simmons - now known as Spawn - to serve his place as a ranking officer in the devil's army, a recruiter of evil souls for the final battle of Armageddon.

HBO Animation's first production, the six-episode animated mini-series *Spawn*, was one of HBO's top-rated programs - even though it had a Friday midnight time slot. Not since John Milton's *Paradise Lost* has the battle between Heaven and Hell been so intense. And not since *Heavy Metal* has an American-made animated program shown so much blood, gore and sex.

In the six-episode mini-series, *Spawn* resurfaces in New York City, living in the decaying alleys and fighting anybody - demons, crime lords, cops - that would violate what little privacy and solitude he has. Guiding him in one direction is the Clown, a demon from Hell who wants *Spawn* to begin recruiting souls for Armageddon. If Clown is *Spawn*'s super-ego, then Cogliostro, an immortal spawn who himself shed the body armor and now tries to convince other hellspawns to do the same, is the id.

It's a benchmark in animated programs, because in the past ten years, television cartoons have progressed from the Saturday morning limited animation ghetto to various artistic niches and genres. Programs were specifically designed for prime time viewing with multi-level humor or satire (*The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill*), for film noir aficionados (*Batman: The Animated Series*, *Gargoyles*), and for the alternative Generation X collective (*Beavis and Butt-Head*, *Aeon Flux*).

Spawn was the first animated series to receive the TV-MA rating, specifically warning parents to keep the youngsters away. If that rating is not enough of a warning, and you don't mind your youngsters seeing people getting shot, arms being ripped from their sockets, language that would make Howard Stern blush, and shadowy scenes of sex and nudity, it's your choice.

Although Japanese anime series like *Gall Force*, *Bubblegum Crisis* and *Ranma* have used violence and nudity in their programs, no network would dare air these shows intact on a Saturday morning. And if anime did air at breakfast time - like *Sailor Moon*, *Space Battleship Yamato* and *Gatchaman* - their sex and violence were indiscriminately hacked out of each episode. HBO was no different. For years, their animated programs consisted of imported cartoons tailored as "edu-tainment" programs (*The Adventures of Tintin*, *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*, *Seabert*, *Testament*). But as HBO's motion picture studio has successfully created their own original movies and television shows (*The Larry Sanders Show*, *Dennis Miller Live*), the new HBO Animation studios were finally free to create their own homegrown programs (Ralph Bakshi's *Spicy City* aired in July, while *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child* commences its third season of episodes).

"Traditionally, in the area of animation, HBO has produced family fare," said Chris Albrecht, the president of HBO Original Programming. "HBO Animation will explore the largely untapped field of adult-oriented animation, allowing offbeat creative talents the kind of unrestricted freedom that's rare on television. This new programming division will continue the tradition of innovative entertainment HBO has become known for."

Spawn was created by Todd McFarlane, one of the top artists in comics today. At the beginning of each episode, McFarlane talks to the audience, as he sits at an artist's drafting table, inking out scenes from an upcoming episode. He was the co-creator of *Venom*, one of *Spider-Man*'s most vicious and malevolent adversaries. His artwork was so striking that Marvel Comics created an entire *Spider-Man* magazine just for him (the December 1990 debut issue of *Spider-Man* sold 2.5 million cop-

ies, one of the best selling titles in comic book history).

By 1992, McFarlane and several other artists left the Marvel studios and created Image Comics, a title where the cartoonists would share in the profits. McFarlane's first magazine for Image, *Spawn*, sold 1.7 million copies, the largest sale for a debut independent comic. The *Spawn* comic book currently ranks among the best selling comic books on the market; a line of *Spawn* toy figurines, currently in their eighth series of pressings, sold out faster than the Power Rangers toys. A 1996 *Forbes* article listed McFarlane's personal wealth at \$5 million, the highest paid comic book artist in North America.

Characters in the *Spawn* television show, like the comic book, are three-dimensional and face many choices, with the most obvious answer not always the right one. During his time as a spawn-in-training, *Spawn* needs to gather souls as footsoldiers for the devil Malebolgia's army. With *Spawn*'s massive powers - incredible strength, invulnerability, teleportation, hell-born energy and a symbiotic bodysuit with thought-controlled chains of death - he can use these powers for good or for evil, at his own choice. But it's a hollow choice. *Spawn* can sit around and do nothing - allowing evil to continue and Hell to rack up more tenants. *Spawn* can kill the bad guys - which populates Hell a little faster. Or he can kill the good guys - which increases his training as Hell's ranking officer. And compounding all that is *Spawn*'s biological timer - when the series begins, it is set at 9999, and gradually decreases whenever *Spawn* uses one of his powers. When the timer reaches zero, *Spawn* is returned to Hell as an eternal slave to Malebolgia. And during his time on earth, everybody wants to eliminate *Spawn* - the mob, the government, the police, various supervillains, even Heaven's warrior angels. And the bad guys aren't just attacking *Spawn* - they want his former wife and her child as well, in hopes of either killing *Spawn* or converting him to his basest instincts - to be that killing machine Malebolgia wants.

So his only hope is to find a way to break Hell's contract, to undo his final wish and rest in peace. Somehow.

There are other peripheral characters in the series, each of whom have

their own conflicts and problems. Tony Twist (not to be confused with the St. Louis Blues defenseman) is a Mafia lord and enforcer for evil national security agent Jason Wynn. Sam and Twitch are two New York City detectives whose outward appearances - Sam is never less than ten feet away from food, Twitch looks like the nerd from high school - belie their internal specialties (Twitch is an excellent marksman, while Sam knows the city and all its quirks and foibles). Senator Scott McMillan, a Congressional puppet for Jason Wynn, looks to move toward the Presidency without his closet skeletons being exposed.

The television series is probably the darkest animated half-hour on television. Unlike *Batman: The Animated Series*, whose Gotham City is populated with art-deco buildings and angularly drawn characters, *Spawn*'s New York City is deep and grim. Characters often appear only in shadow. In many cases, the alleys are so dark that only *Spawn*'s eyes can be seen. Characters get shot. Their bones get broken. Blood gushes out of bullet wounds and of broken bones. One villain breaks off a homeless man's arm and writes on the wall with it as a blood-filled fountain pen. In many ways, this is the first attempt by any animation studio to create an adults-only cartoon, even if it means leaving in every drop of the violence and adult themes that came from the comic books.

What's next for *Spawn*? A home video game is being fine tuned for autumn release. A live action motion picture, starring Michael Jai White (*Tyson*) and John Leguizamo (*House of Buggin'*) was released in August. The animated series has recently been released to video. And response to the show has been so overwhelming - some *Spawn* fans claimed to be Animato! writers in order to acquire promotional materials from HBO - that plans are in motion to continue the animated series next year.

Chuck Miller is a freelance writer living in Albany, New York. His last article was a history of the Davey and Goliath Show in Animato! #35.

SPAWN EPISODE GUIDE

Episode 1, "Burning Visions"

(original air date: 5/16/97)

Timer at 9999. We get our first glimpse of Spawn, a caped, cowed apparition with a deep guttural voice, as he intervenes in a Mafia murder of two reporters by killing the mobsters. He is haunted by fleeting memories of someone named Wanda, but no memory of who he is or how he got here. With the assistance of the dwarfish demon Clown, he discovers that he was once Al Simmons, a government hit man who was himself murdered. Now, because he cut a deal with the devil for his life, he has become Spawn, a ranking officer in the Devil Malebolgia's army, in training for the eventual Armageddon. Meanwhile, Tony Twist, boss of the dead mobsters, wants to know who slaughtered three of his best men.

Episode 2, "Evil Intent"

(original air date: 5/23/97)

Twist's minions rough up some homeless bums, looking for information about the mobster murders. Meanwhile, Senator McMillan is blackmailed into running for president by powerful CIA officer Jason Wynn. Clown reveals his true identity as the malevolent demon Violator, whose job it is to train Spawn into a killing machine. Spawn also meets Cogliostro for the first time, who hints at the reasons, motives and powers of Spawn. And Tony Twist calls in some reinforcements - a bloodthirsty cyborg named Overkill. Timer at 9962.

Episode 3, "No Rest, No Peace"

(original air date: 5/30/97)

Timer at 9654. Wanda discovers some information that may prove beneficial in her defense of a child killer. Overkill searches the alleys, looking for whoever killed the mobsters. Spawn breaks into a CIA arsenal, searching for weapons, only to find he has a new, heretofore undiscovered power. Timer at 9324. Spawn and Overkill battle, and the outcome has serious ramifications for Tony Twist. Meanwhile, Clown keeps an eye on Billy Kincaid, an ice cream truck-driving child-killing psychopath.

Episode 4, "Dominoes"

(original air date: 6/6/97)

We get our first look at Angela, a bounty-hunting angel who wants a license to kill Spawn. Spawn confronts a photographer who is taking Wanda's picture for no known reason. Twist sends a videotape of Spawn to Jason Wynn, who recruits Jess Chapel to find out more information. Spawn still deals with the loss of his memories. Sam and Twitch investigate a connection between the alley murders and some cell phone recordings. Timer at 9017.

Episode 5, "Souls In The Balance"

(original air date: 6/13/97)

Timer at 8993. A grenade-toting street preacher, holding a kidnapped boy, holds policemen at bay. Senator McMillan discovers somebody hacking into his family history records, and suspects Wanda Blake. Terry investigates the whereabouts of missing weapons from the CIA depot, which bothers Wynn even more. To keep Terry from finding out too much, and to hopefully derail Wanda's investigations, Wynn orders Tony Twist to kidnap Cyan, which he does. Meanwhile, Clown gives Billy Kincaid the directions to the whereabouts of the kidnapped Cyan.

Episode 6, "End Games"

(original air date: 6/20/97)

Timer at 8744. The search for Cyan continues, as Spawn confronts Twist on the kidnapped girl's whereabouts. Sam and Twitch finally decipher the cell phone recordings, and figure out the connection between Kincaid and Senator McMillan. Meanwhile, Wynn confronts McMillan about Kincaid's disruption of the kidnapping. Kincaid races his ice cream truck down the New York City streets, with Spawn hanging on the roof, and Sam and Twitch in high speed pursuit. Spawn finally traps Kincaid in the alleys, and with Clown watching from the rooftops, Spawn makes a decision that will finally affect his deal with Malebolgia.

SPAWN Characters and Voice Actors

<i>Spawn</i>	Keith David
<i>Cogliostro</i>	Richard Dysart
<i>Clown</i>	Michael Nickelosi
<i>Wanda Blake</i>	Dominique Jennings
<i>Terry Fitzgerald</i>	Victor Love
<i>Cyan</i>	Kath Soucie
<i>Sam Burke</i>	James Keane
<i>Twitch Williams</i>	Michael McShane
<i>Jason Wynn</i>	John Rafter Lee
<i>Tony Twist</i>	James Keane
<i>Senator McMillan</i>	Ronny Cox
<i>Bobby</i>	Victor Love
<i>Gareb</i>	Michael McShane
<i>Violator</i>	James Hanes
<i>Overkill</i>	James Hanes
<i>Billy Kincaid</i>	Ronny Cox
<i>Angela</i>	Denise Poirier
<i>Cain</i>	Michael McShane
<i>Jess Chapel</i>	Ruben Santiago-Hudson

Additional voices:

Charlie Adler, Alex Fernandez, John Hostetter, Matt K. Miller, Paul Raci, Kath Soucie, Steven Franken, Andy Philpot, Pamela Segall, Tony Amendola, Matthew Flint, John DeMita, Denise Poirier, Seth Margolis, Vince Melocchi.



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SAN DIEGO COMIC-CON: AN ANIMATION FAN'S REPORT

by Amid Amidi

This year marked the 28th annual San Diego Comic-Con and once again for four days the streets of downtown San Diego were filled with comic lovers from around the world. However, over the years, the Comic-Con has grown to please not just comic readers but also fans of movies, sci-fi, games, collectibles and the reason I was there - animation. During the Con's 28-year history, such animation luminaries as Bob Clampett, Chuck Jones, George Pal, Mel Blanc, June Foray, Grim Natwick, Clarence Nash, Osamu Tezuka, Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston and Ward Kimball have attended. This year was no different as many of today's greatest animators gathered for the fun.

As usual there were tons of animation collectibles on the convention floor and one could find enough cels, books, and Disney toys to run your wallet dry. Companies such as Animation Magazine, Spike and Mike, Manga Entertainment and Streamline Pictures showcased their wares alongside the hundreds of comic dealers and the ever-popular Simpsons creator Matt Groening generously drew Bart and Lisa for fans at his Bongo Comics booth.

However, the major animation events took place at the panels which were held upstairs and there were enough panels to satisfy even the most discerning animation buff. For starters, the Warner Bros. panel packed the room and rightly so as Boyd Kirkland and Randy Rogel (writers of the upcoming *Batman: Subzero*) showed a preview of the upcoming direct-to-video animated Batman film. Warner's first fully animated film, *Quest for Camelot*, also had a presence with the director, Frederick du Chau, and producer, Dalisa Cooper Cohen, present to show a just-finished trailer for the film which will showcase the vocal talents of Gabriel Byrne, Jane Seymour, Bronson Pinchot, Jaleel White, Gary Oldman, Pierce Brosnan and get this, Don Rickles as a two-headed dragon. Scary

indeed! They also assured us that the film would have more of an action-adventure feel than the Disney films we've all become accustomed to watching. Next up were Alan Burnett, Paul Dini and Bruce Timm who talked about the upcoming animated Superman and Batman TV shows and showed a new complete Superman episode with Mr. Mxypltzk that has got to be one of the funniest cartoons I've ever seen. The audience response was phenomenal as the whole place was shaken by laughter. Superhero comedy in its finest form. Other exciting news was that Paul Dini is currently writing an Art of Batman book which will showcase conceptual art and drawings from the TV series.

Joe Haidar. The panel was quite amusing as each of them took turns drawing for the audience as well as answering questions about their work habits and ideas.

While Disney represents the safer side of animation, another more adult event was the roundtable discussion with Aeon Flux creator, Peter Chung. He gathered with over 50 fans to discuss his career and his work as well as offer insights into his artistic process. Amazingly enough he revealed that one of his first jobs was working at Disney Feature Animation in the early 80s.

Freakazoid, a WB cartoon that Warner disliked for its rather adult nature showed up at the Cartoon Network



The Disney Guys enjoying San Diego: Joe Haidar, unidentified, Mike Surrey, Nik Ranieri, unidentified, Tony Bancroft, (front) Brian Ferguson

Not to be outdone, Disney showed up in full force sending some of their best animators for a lively panel regarding the making of Hercules and some talk of their next film Mulan. The director of Mulan, Tony Bancroft, as well as a group of their top animators showed up including Nick Ranieri, Brian Ferguson, Mike Surrey and

Freakazoid screening. The screening drew a nice crowd and gave reassuring news that this show is far from dead. *Freakazoid* producer Paul Rugg said that both Steven Spielberg and Ted Turner support the show and that there is a possibility of new shows in the future.

Cartoon Network showed some



Peter Chung

muscle because aside from their *Freakazoid* screening, they also hosted panels regarding the release of their new comics based on classic cartoons like the *Flintstones*, *Scooby-Doo* and the *Jetsons* as well as a screening of their new series. Their new series screening was a quite crowded event with new episodes of *Dexter's Laboratory*, *Johnny Bravo* and *Cow and Chicken* being shown along with a Q and A session with the creators of the three shows - Genndy Tartakovsky, Van Partible and David Feiss, respectively. Interestingly enough, while the creators of *Dexter's Lab* and *Johnny Bravo* were relatively younger, the creator of the wild *Cow and Chicken* show has been working at Hanna-Barbera for 19 years!

Of all the panels, the Voice Acting panel would have to be the highlight of the con-

vention. Mark Evanier (animation writer supreme) moderated this panel of some of the greatest voice actors of today and yesterday featuring Rob Paulsen (Pinky, Yakko), Maurice LaMarche (The Brain, Dizzy Devil), Gregg Berger (Duckman's Cornfed), Joe Alaskey (Plucky Duck, current Yosemite Sam and Daffy) and Lucille Bliss (Smurfette, Crusader Rabbit). Each of these talented voice actors demonstrated their wonderful talents as well as relating stories and anecdotes about their experiences in the voice acting biz. When one person from the audience asked what was the best advice for a young hopeful trying to break in; the response was "Run over Frank Welker." Later in the day, Lucille Bliss held an informative workshop giving people more helpful advice on how to become a successful voice actor.

Now for me to describe all the other panels would take quite a few pages so I'll briefly give you a rundown of some of the highlights. HBO held an interesting talk about their adult cartoons, *Spawn* and *Spicy City*, with *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane, Catherine Winder and Eric Radomski; Marvel Animation previewed *Silver Surfer: TAS*, the people behind *Captain Simian & the Space Monkeys* pleased their fans with a panel on the show, animation historians Jerry Beck and Bob Miller



Matt Groening and Marge

discussed why classic cartoons have stood the test of time, Reboot writers showed a preview of the third season for the all-CGI show, a sneak preview of a kids show - *Pocket Dragon Adventures* was presented, and another panel discussed the trend toward more adult animation. Whewww! That was quite a sentence.

In this writer's opinion, the Comic-Con is truly one of the best places for an animation fan to visit. Every year is different as to how many animation-related shows you'll find, yet I can assure you that you won't come away disappointed. There's always something there to please and the friendly atmosphere can't be beat. The only down side to the whole thing is the year of waiting that follows the four-day extravaganza.

--Amid Amidi



**Fan favorites wandering the show:
Rob Paulsen and Maurice LaMarche**

Happy Birthday Chuck Jones

(Continued from Page 4)

together. We've never had a major fight, but we've had our disagreements. It's a pretty ideal relationship. I enjoy being involved in his work."

What does someone get a father as an 85th birthday present, when that father is Chuck Jones? It's not easy, Linda explained. "It varies. I am honestly stumped on this one. It's a special birthday. In the past, I've always tried to get him something that relates to something he loves. He really loves Mark Twain, so I once got him a first edition of a Mark Twain book. A few times I've written him letters telling him how much I care for him and love him. In the past, my daughter has made bow ties for him, using special material that she feels he would like. Those kinds of things touch his heart. I'm still searching for what I'll do this

year. It has to be something that will convey how much I love him."

Linda was not afraid to say that she is honored to have been graced with a father who is one of the most recognized names in the entertainment business. Many people might say that they've grown up with Chuck Jones, but she really did. And, being as proud of him as she is, Linda would never trade that for anything in the world.

"We have a very close relationship. It's quite remarkable, and I didn't realize how remarkable it was until other people started telling me that they don't have relationships with their fathers like my relationship with Chuck. He gave me such an incredible childhood, filled with love and support. He loved me unconditionally and I've loved him the same way. I'm truly delighted that he's able to continue to do what he loves to do ... to draw and paint and travel and write."

So let us add our best wishes to that of Linda Jones Clough's ... Happy Birthday Chuck Jones!

--Glenn Anton



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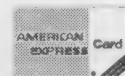
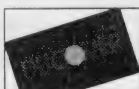
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A LITTLE BIRDIE TOLD ME

A Gossip Column
by Thelma Scumm



Hello, dearies! Thank you for all your nice comments about my return — I'm soooo happy! (And to all you folks at the Cartoon Network who xeroxed my column and passed it around: kissy kissy!!!)

I have a lot of ranting to do this issue, so let's get started. (Remember, the views expressed here are mine and not necessarily those of the management of ANiMATO!)

Well, *Hercules* hasn't exactly been the smash Disney was hoping for now, was it? The critics and pundits have been having a field day discussing why, and there are some interesting theories: (1) Lots of competition this summer. There were some really big blockbusters standing in the way of the film, keeping the repeat business from blossoming; (2) Bad Publicity — the film looked snide and sarcastic and not at all like a *Disney* family film; (3) Not a great picture. *Hercules* had lots of gags and good songs but overall it was a much weaker picture than other recent Disney hits.

I have a different viewpoint: Whaddya want? The film made over \$100,000,000, and that's before overseas sales and video sales! That's a hit in anyone's eyes! That's more than *Little Mermaid* made when it was first released and everyone called *that* a huge success. It seems that every Disney film of late is being compared to *The Lion King* which was the #1 film of the year when it came out. That's like saying *Men in Black* wasn't a hit because it didn't do as much business as *Star Wars*. Sheesh.

I enjoyed *Hercules* but not as

much as I should have. I mean, it was better than *Pocahontas* (the weakest of the post-Mermaid films) but not as good as Musker and Clement's other classics. I had problems with the story mainly. It seemed to take forever to get Herc into adulthood, and the training sequences, although interesting, didn't really have anything to do with the plot. You could cut from infant to adult and not really lose anything, and that's the sign of a weak script. (Hey, and you'd also get rid of the one bad song in the movie — *Go the Distance* — which sounds like the kind of crap that only people like Michael Bolton would sing. Wait a minute...)

I also didn't like the fact that *Hercules* saved the day by mere strength in the end. What, one semi-human is stronger and more powerful than all the gods combined? As I was watching it, I was excited by the fact that he lost his power in the end. I thought he would somehow outsmart and outmaneuver the titans, thus proving that being a hero has more to do with bravery and sacrifice than brute strength. (Yes, I know that point was made later but it would have been a lot stronger if Herc never got his power back until saving Meg.)

Anyway, there were some great touches though (like Meg's song), and I will still buy the tape when it comes out and watch it. (As an aside: Hey Disney! You ever gonna release widescreen editions on videotape or what?)

To be honest, I think I enjoyed *Cats Don't Dance* more. It had that same sort of irreverent feel to it as *Hercules* (You know, that Warner Brothers feel) but

had a tighter story. Maybe it was because this was so unexpected. The film was released and WB did a minimum of promotion, and it died quickly. It's charming and very funny and different, and if you haven't seen it yet, you're not a real cartoon fan! The music (by Randy Newman) was vastly inferior to *Hercules* but I've still been watching the tape over and over (along with my new improved *Mary Poppins* tape, and, of course, *Hunchback* which gets shown around here weekly.)

I get a lot of my animation information from the web and the internet these days, but I'm getting a little tired of getting online wanting to read posts about the new Disney films only to be inundated by the largest group of Know Nothings who ever learned how to read: the Southern Baptists. Well, OK, not all of them, but the ones who spill hate and vile all over the Disney posts are not doing a thing to convert anyone to their way of thinking.

These bigots (who, you may recall from your history, opposed freeing the slaves, argued about whether African Americans and women had souls, refuse to believe that evolution is a scientifically accepted fact, and otherwise do the best they can to ignore the parts of the Bible that talk about Jesus having compassion for the lepers and downtrodden in society) have organized a boycott of Disney. That's fine and dandy — this is America, after all, you can boycott whoever you want. And what are they boycotting Disney over? The fact that Disney uses child labor and "slave" labor overseas for its products? No, that is perfectly fine with these guys. They're upset because Disney finally joined with the rest of the entertainment industry and many others who actually live in the 1990s and has decided that it would not discriminate against their employees.

Horrors! How dare this Family Company show compassion!

Give me a break. If nothing else, accept it as a business decision: If Disney did not provide benefits for gay couples, they would lose employees to other businesses that do. Face it folks: there are many talented gay people, and it is absolutely stupid to lose them over an issue that has nothing at all to do with the product. Do you really care what the in-betweeners of Pegasus does in the privacy of her own home?

(Continued on Page 88)

The biggest blasphemy Disney did was promote a TV show (*Ellen*) about a woman who happens to be a lesbian. All the arguments I read from these bigots seem to imply that the show, by portraying Ellen as a real person with real emotions instead of as someone needing to be "saved," will lead their children to lives of sin and debauchery that they wouldn't get from watching, say *NYPD Blue* or *Baywatch*. Somehow, despite every piece of evidence to the contrary, they think that their poor children will grow up to become gay simply by watching a TV show. Apparently, none of the Baptists have "off" switches on their televisions.

Well, let me get off my soap-box for a minute here, as I could rant on this topic for days. I know it's not really a cartoon topic, but let's face it, if we don't fight narrow mindedness wherever we see it, it will have power and produce Richard Rich films.

Speaking of the internet, I must say that I have found that for some reason, Nick Park's fans are the rudest. I can't say anything on their newsgroup without being stomped on! Hey, where are those stiff upper British lips? And that sense of humor?

Disney's upcoming *Tarzan* is having some problems. Originally it was going to be a straight to video release done by the TV production crew (who did the *Aladdin* sequels), but management warmed to the idea of it as a feature film and after the TV department had done most of the development work, it was taken away and given to the feature department. Lots of resignations, which usually makes Dreamworks happy.

Speaking of animators and work, I must report that I recently have discovered that many of these animators and directors are making salaries in the millions. It's about bloody time! I know some animators who have been around for years, and they can't believe it either — the film industry is finally realizing that they're worth it! After all, if Joel Whats-his-name can get millions for directing crap like

Batman and Robin, certainly an animation director, who has more creative control over a film, is worth as much!

That has always been a sore point with me, ever since *Beauty and the Beast* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture and the directors weren't even nominated. Hello? What, did the film draw itself? An animated film is more the vision of the director(s) than is a live action film. As Alfred Hitchcock once said "I admire

(Oh, and it seems that Disney is finally admitting that they made *Black Cauldron* — it is being released on video in England this month. Maybe it will appear in the USA soon afterwards? I mean, really, it wasn't a great film, but it certainly was better than *Robin Hood* or *Sword in the Stone*.)

Ron Musker and John Clements meanwhile have as their next project something called *Treasure Planet* — Robert Louis Stevenson in space! What is it about Stevenson novels that make people want to put them in space? Wasn't that TV show *Lost in Space* just *Swiss Family Robinson* on a spaceship? Warning, Will Robinson! Danger! Danger!

Meanwhile, over at Dreamworks SKG, they're hard at work on their musical *The Prince of Egypt* - the story of Moses, fun loving song and dance man, featuring the voice of Mel Brooks ("I have these 15 Commandments here. . .oops! (Crash!) Uh.. Ten! Ten Commandments here. . ."). I admit that I don't have high hopes for this project for a couple of reasons: First, it is being directed by Simon Wells, known for the animation classics *Fievel Goes West*, *Balto* and *We're Back*. Expect Moses to have a cute animal sidekick. Second, in order to keep from having bigots boycott them too, Jeffrey Katzenberg met with Christian Coalition leader Ralph Reed who gave script approval. Not good signs.

Hey, and talk about strange relationships: The codirector of *Prince of Egypt* is Brenda Chapman, formerly of Disney — whose husband is Kevin Lima, codirector of *Tarzan*. I'll bet they're both spies.

Well, I've really rambled on a lot this issue. Thanks for indulging me. Remember to visit my meager web site (<http://members.aol.com/ThelmaScumm>) where you can vote for your favorite animated films, TV series, and specials, and get links of various animated pages. You can also send me email at ThelmaScumm@aol.com.

So, until next time, remember — If you can't say something nice about someone, come sit by me.

--Thelma Scumm



animation directors. If they don't like an actor, they can just rip him up."

The joke around Disney was that Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale (directors of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Hunchback of Notre Dame* in case you didn't know) would next direct either *The Phantom of the Opera* or *Cyrano de Bergerac* since they only know how to direct films that take place in France and feature an ugly man in love with a beautiful woman. The reality is that their next film is called *Atlantis* and will be the first Disney film since *The Black Cauldron* to be in 70 mm. I wonder if they're going to use Shirley MacLaine as a consultant — or at least Shirley the Loon.

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